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GEORGE ELIOT

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GEORGE ELIOT

George Eliot.

From a painting by M. D'Albert Durade.

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GEORGE ELIOT

By

VIOLA MEYNELL

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Calendar of Principal Events in George Eliot's Life

1819 November 22. Born at South Farm, Arbury, Warwickshire.
1836 Death of her mother.
1840 First poem published in *Christian Observer.*
1849 Death of her father. First journey abroad.
1851 Became assistant editor of the *Westminster Review.* Acquaintance with Herbert Spencer.
1854 Union with Mr. Lewes. Resigned assistant editorship of *Westminster Review.*
1857 Adopted the name of George Eliot.
1878 George Henry Lewes died.
1880 May. Married John Walter Cross at St. George's, Hanover Square. December 22: George Eliot died. Her grave is in Highgate Cemetery, next to that of Mr. Lewes.

Introduction

MARY ANN EVANS was born on November 22nd, 1819, on the Arbury estate, in Warwickshire. Her father, Robert Evans, was land agent to the Newdigate family, and her mother was Christiana Pearson, who married Robert Evans in 1813. When Marian (as she liked to be called) was twenty-two, she moved with her father to Coventry, her mother being dead, and her sister and brother being married. After an Evangelical childhood, new friends at Coventry helped to transform her religious ideas. " My only desire is to know the truth, my only fear to cling to error," she wrote, during the process of the change. Her new scepticism led to a refusal to accompany her father to church, and this caused an estrangement which she subsequently healed by resuming the old practice.

Robert Evans died in 1849, his daughter having nursed him devotedly for three years. After a brief, enlightening stay abroad, Marian Evans returned to England. She was thirty years of age, and she wrote : " The only ardent hope I have for my future life is to have given to me some woman's duty, some possibility of devoting myself where I may see a daily result of pure, calm blessedness in the life of another." In 1851 she became the assistant editor of the *Westminster Review*, and was in touch with most of the intellectual men of her time. She resigned this post in 1854, after a period of strenuous hard work.

George Henry Lewes had, in 1851, been introduced to Marian Evans by Herbert Spencer. He was thirty-four, two years older than herself, and a confident writer and talker on all the literary and philosophic episodes, both at home and abroad, which most interested her. He was unhappily married, and Marian Evans, who had no faith in the indissolubility of the marriage tie, held herself justified in forming a union with him. In 1854 they left England together. Her conscientious conviction that her act was a moral act enabled her to lead a happy life in the mutual devotion of herself and Lewes, and in their common interest in her work. An inscription written on the manuscript of *Romola*, many years later, records her state of mind. "To the Husband, whose perfect love has been the best source of her insight and strength, this manuscript is given by his devoted wife, the writer."

Settled at Richmond in 1856, she at last began to write the novels which her philosophic interests had hitherto deferred. ("I have known but few men with whom I could discuss a question in philosophy with more satisfaction," Herbert Spencer wrote of her.) She was thirty-six when, urged by Mr. Lewes, she began *Scenes of Clerical Life;* these were sent by Lewes to the editor of *Blackwood's Magazine*, as having been written by an anonymous friend. This friend "is afraid of failure," Lewes wrote, "though not afraid of obscurity; and by failure he would understand that which I suspect most writers would be apt to consider as success—so high is his ambition. I tell you this that you may understand the sort of

shy, shrinking, ambitious nature you have to deal with." The three tales were accepted and appeared in different issues of *Blackwood's Magazine* in the year 1857, and in 1858 they were published together as *Scenes of Clerical Life*. *Mr. Gilfil's Love Story* would, we can believe, have left a critic dubious as to the final achievement of its author. There is too much reliance in the sentiment of the story, and the characterisation is an inferior interest. But *Amos Barton* with its expert characterisation, is a more revealing sign of what was to come; and *Janet's Repentance* has passages of the highest art. The book was appreciated by many important critics, particularly by Dickens.

With her next two books, *Adam Bede*, 1859, and *The Mill on the Floss*, 1860, she won immediate and wide success. Her contemporary writers showered praise on George Eliot, and no praise could be too high for those masterpieces. She had a deep and simple appreciation of her own achievements, and, after the appearance of *Adam Bede*, said: "Shall I ever write another book as true as *Adam Bede*?" When she heard Bulwer's pronouncement that the use of dialect and the marriage of Adam were the two defects of the book, she said: "Of course, I would have my teeth drawn rather than give up either." *Silas Marner* was published a year after *The Mill on the Floss*, and has been named the most perfect of her books. In those technical qualities of "balance" or "finish" which are claimed for it, this may be true, but there is nothing in it which approaches the genius of, say, the journey of Hetty in *Adam*

Bede, or Maggie's relation with Tom in *The Mill on the Floss*.

For her next book, *Romola*, George Eliot was offered ten thousand pounds by George Smith, the publisher. She had paid two brief visits to Florence, and been indefatigable in reading necessary authorities, and she had suffered a great deal from depression and hopelessness in regard to this laborious work. She was young, she said, when she began it, and old when it was finished. In *Adam Bede* and *The Mill on the Floss* she may not have performed such an admirable feat of perseverance and endeavour, and they, being full of her young memories and associations, did not so spend her imaginative strength. But in spite of the noble character of Romola, and the excellent way in which Tito, the plaything of circumstance, is made to slip into vice, there is, on the whole, a sacrifice of the close human interest (surely the best thing a novelist can give us) to the interest of time and place. It is true Romola is grand, but Maggie is grand and is not aloof. And we have already seen Arthur Donnithorne slipping into vice, with all his good intentions, and his strange, true mixture of self-knowledge and ingenious self-deception.

George Eliot and Mr. Lewes lived in various houses in London, only taking trips to the country and abroad, though George Eliot said that leaving London " makes a new creature of me in half an hour." She was peculiarly affected by weather. " Yesterday it rained," she wrote, " and of course I said *cui bono ?* and found my troubles almost more than I could bear;

to-day the sun shines, consequently I find life very glorious." "Was there ever anything more dreary than this June?" she wrote again. It was a cold rain driven on a chill wind that made her melancholy and gave her pains in her head; and a loud wind became a torment to her. "It seems something incredible written in my memory that when I was a little girl I loved the wind—used to like to walk about when it was blowing great guns." That physical sensibility to unfavourable conditions had its mental counterpart in her want of bravery to meet adverse criticism of her work. Lewes adopted the plan, with her connivance, of concealing from her anything that was not praise; and this strange course seems to have been necessary to her happiness and health.

Felix Holt, the Spanish Gypsy, The Legend of Jubal, Middlemarch, and *Daniel Deronda* were published during the next thirteen years. Amid a great deal that is somewhat diffuse, the characters of Gwendolen and Grandcourt in *Daniel Deronda* are drawn with the summed-up genius of long observation and discernment. Gwendolen is no less tragic a figure than Maggie, for all that her tone is more modern, and her style more affluent. For no heroine could be more tragic than Gwendolen in her outspoken grief when Deronda tells her that he is to be married. "I said I should be forsaken. I have been a cruel woman. And I am forsaken." (Among the old sins that load her conscience is the strangling of her sister's canary because it persistently interrupted her singing.)

In 1878 Lewes died. He had been to George Eliot an assiduous and faithful companion for twenty-four

years, perpetually careful of her frail health, and stimulating her authorship by enthusiastic and reasonable admiration. Not only did he originally persuade her to write fiction, but his steadfast encouragement of her genius was always the best antidote to the fits of hopeless depression from which she periodically suffered. She mourned his loss.

Her habits of industry helped her now. She completed some work which Lewes had left unfinished, and she founded a scholarship of original research in physiology, in his memory; she was also working at a volume of essays called *Theophrastus Such.* In May, 1880, she put an end to her solitude by marrying John Walter Cross, a friend of many years' standing, and she spent a happy summer and autumn with him in Italy and England. But in December she died, and was buried by the side of George Henry Lewes at Highgate.

The work George Eliot gave to the world was the double cream of her thought. That she went through a severe process of selection in her published writing is clear to the reader of her letters. These were naturally not so severely thought out; and when in a letter she records a flat anecdote, admiration is only increased for the author who, in the works she gave to the world, rarely wrote an insignificant passage. And from among her many great passages here are two, one from *Janet's Repentance.* Janet's mother, after a happy visit from her daughter, broods on the future.

"Janet looked glad and tender now—but what scene of misery was coming next? She was too like the

cistus flowers in the little garden before the window, that, with the shades of evening, might be with the delicate white and glossy dark of their petals trampled in the roadside dust. When the sun had sunk, and the twilight was deepening, Janet might be sitting there, heated, maddened, sobbing out her griefs with selfish passion, and wildly wishing herself dead."

And in *Adam Bede,* when the guilty meeting of Arthur and Hetty in the wood has been described there follows this passage, that is at once moving and awful in its simple recollection of the necessary innocence of childhood and the unsought responsibilities that come with maturity.

"Poor things! It was a pity they were not in that golden age of childhood when they would have stood face to face, eyeing each other with timid liking, then given each other a little butterfly kiss, and toddled off to play together. Arthur would have gone home to his silk-curtained cot, and Hetty to her home-spun pillow, and both would have slept without dreams, and to-morrow would have been a life hardly conscious of a yesterday."

George Eliot put into literature the pure and inspiring pastorate of man over woman; she saved Janet by Tryan, Romola by Savonarola, Esther Lyon by Felix Holt, Gwendolen by Deronda. She is satisfied to give her women passion and earnestness, and a certain unintellectual blindness to the highest rectitude; they lack nothing but discernment, and that they learn, at the price of their proud, faithful hearts; and they are steadfast. In each case the apostolic man becomes the woman's

conscience. And the morality to which he urges her, and to which he holds her, is summed up in a self-denying response to the claims of others—of those nearest, by blood, race, or circumstance, foremost. George Eliot was far too practical a moralist to dispense with a definite code ; and hers is, without sanction in a future life, uncompromisingly Christian. Endurance, help, and duty are the inalienable obligations. A duty to which man or woman is committed, whether by choice and responsibility personally undertaken, as by marriage (in the case of Romola) or by mere race or descent (in the case of Deronda) must be answered to the full and at every cost. Even responsibilities incurred by accident, or by the choice of others, are to have a complete reply and to be a law of life and a rule of action. This was the code of a woman who in her own conduct of life had broken all the pledges made and implied for her by her parentage, kin, and education. In her books there is no compromise or dispensation possible. The inconsistency of her conspicuous life with her conspicuous word must be left as it stands.

All she wrote is for the inculcation of the morality she set herself to teach. That strenuous purpose even forms her style, which is so intent upon the purpose as—in the expository passages—to leave little leisure for ease and little care for dignity. Her English is not often beautiful, though in the earlier books it has the great secondary merit of simplicity. A slight pedantry, attributed to the influence of Lewes, who was a scientific writer of the second class, and a philosophic writer of about the third order,

did somewhat tamper with her later style ; but her readers carry back their warmest appreciation to the earlier manner, which was as nearly as possible no manner.

Her poetry is dedicated to the same purpose as her prose. It teaches ; and the world's impatience of the lesson has perhaps deprived *Jubal* and the *Spanish Gypsy* of their proper praise. Respectful as the press was to George Eliot during her lifetime —such critics as those writing in the *Times* were indeed reverential—her poems were received with a covert protest. She was invited, as less favoured authors were bidden, to leave poetry and do some other thing. Yet *The Spanish Gypsy, Armgart, Jubal,* and the few lyrics, if not magical poetry, are imaginative poetry, exalted, impassioned, and adorned with symbolism. The lines " Oh, might I join the Choir Invisible " became dear to the congregations of the " Positivist " meetings, and, set to music, took with them the place of a hymn.

George Eliot's ideal does not merely teach self-sacrifice, it proceeds to self-annihilation. " Selflessness " is a word often used for " unselfishness " ; but selflessness is the right word for her doctrine. The Christian and the Buddhist alike look to the absorption of the individual life into a life universal, but not to its destruction ; according to the Indian's simile, the drop of water merged in the sea ceases to be a drop, but does not cease to be water. In the doctrine of George Eliot, on the contrary, nothing remains when the earthly life is done except the life of an influence, the fruit of good works in the world. This

" life," however, is " life " only by a kind of rhetorical figure of speech, hyperbole to which we are accustomed by habit.

George Eliot preached her doctrine tenderly in manner, but the matter was hard, the law inexorable. Gwendolen Harleth loves herself; in prosperity her self-love does no more at first than make her a little impatient with her sisters; in adversity it withholds her hand with the saving rope when her husband is drowning. She avows, in her late self-knowledge, that all the evil of her ultimate cruelty was in her when she was fortunate and " innocent." Maggie Tulliver, on the other hand, had become aware of her own egoism in very early life. Having beaten her doll in her young indignations, and pushed a little cousin into a muddy pond in her young jealousy, she corrects herself, reads Thomas à Kempis, sleeps on the floor, administers self-discipline betimes, and when the hour of supreme trial and temptation comes, is strong enough to refuse happiness for herself at the cost of the happiness of another. Because Hetty had indulged herself in a pretty peacock vanity—pretty only because she was pretty, hideous in George Eliot's terrible eye—she exposes her child when trouble comes. It is very hard doctrine. Saint Teresa is not more stern against venial sin.

It is, however, much less as a moralist that this gravest of all novelists has been esteemed than as a humourist. The world, perhaps a little impatient of the sermon, " saves its face " by acclaiming the comedy aloud. Thus doing, it not only evades the close and serious issue, but does itself some honour,

the honour that attends the ready appreciation of the joke, the peculiarly modern honour of the " sense of humour." When it used formerly to be said that women writers had not humour, the exception was made for George Eliot. More justly (seeing how humorous a writer was Jane Austen) it might be said that George Eliot was an exception among women, insomuch as she was a humourist, but not a derisive humourist. Feminine humour has otherwise —whether in the crudities of Fanny Burney or in the delicacies of Jane Austen—generally tended to derision.

It is therefore appropriate that George Eliot's personal bearing has left upon the minds of her surviving friends no impression so marked as that of extreme kindness ; it was all sympathy. She was a most attentive listener ; she took a keen interest in the dress of beautiful women ; her drawing-room was made a little court by Lewes's assiduities, but the armchair throne was occupied by a modest queen. She was before all things benevolent, but benevolent without illusions. She may be said to have written two, perhaps three, of the greatest novels in our language—*Adam Bede* and *The Mill on the Floss* are at any rate sure of that position—with the single intention of warning the young will against moral evil. She did not think her " art " suffered from an ethical motive, nor did it. The writers who delight in calling themselves " non-moral " might hope in vain for the life and spirit of her great and memorable art.

Scenes of Clerical Life

The Sad Fortunes of the Rev. Amos Barton

[*Amos Barton is curate in the parish of Shepperton. He has a wife and six children.*]

LOOK at him as he winds through the little churchyard! The silver light that falls aslant on church and tomb enables you to see his slim black figure, made all the slimmer by tight pantaloons, as it flits past the pale gravestones. He walks with a quick step, and is now rapping with sharp decision at the vicarage door. It is opened without delay by the nurse, cook, and housemaid, all at once—that is to say, by the robust maid-of-all-work, Nanny; and as Mr. Barton hangs up his hat in the passage, you see that a narrow face of no particular complexion—even the small-pox that has attacked it seems to have been of a mongrel, indefinite kind—with features of no particular shape, and an eye of no particular expression, is surmounted by a slope of baldness gently rising from brow to crown. You judge him, rightly, to be about forty. The house is quiet, for it is half-past ten, and the children have long been gone to bed. He opens the sitting-room door, but instead of seeing his wife, as he expected, stitching with the nimblest of fingers by the light of one candle, he finds her dispensing with the light of a candle altogether. She is softly pacing up and down by the red firelight,

holding in her arms little Walter, the year-old baby, who looks over her shoulder with large, wide-open eyes, while the patient mother pats his back with her soft hand, and glances with a sigh at the heap of large and small stockings lying unmended on the table.

She was a lovely woman—Mrs. Amos Barton ; a large, fair, gentle Madonna, with thick, close, chestnut curls beside her well-rounded cheeks, and with large, tender, short-sighted eyes.

[*Mr. Barton reads prayers at the workhouse.*]

Right in front of him—probably because he was stone-deaf, and it was deemed more edifying to hear nothing at a short distance than at a long one—sat "Old Maxum," as he was familiarly called, his real patronymic remaining a mystery to most persons. A fine philological sense discerns in this cognomen an indication that the pauper patriarch had once been considered pithy and sententious in his speech ; but now the weight of ninety-five years lay heavy on his tongue as well as in his ears, and he sat before the clergyman with protruded chin, and munching mouth, and eyes that seemed to look at emptiness.

Next to him sat Poll Fodge—known to the magistracy of her county as Mary Higgins—a one-eyed woman, with a scarred and seamy face, the most notorious rebel in the workhouse, said to have once thrown her broth over the master's coat-tails, and who, in spite of nature's apparent safeguards against that contingency, had contributed to the perpetuation of the Fodge characteristics in the person of a small boy, who was behaving naughtily on one of the back benches. Miss Fodge fixed her one sore eye on Mr. Barton with a sort of hardy defiance.

Beyond this member of the softer sex, at the end of the bench, sat " Silly Jim," a young man afflicted with hydrocephalus, who rolled his head from side to side, and gazed at the point of his nose. These were the supporters of Old Maxum on his right.

On his left sat Mr. Fitchett, a tall fellow, who had once been a footman in the Oldinport family, and in that giddy elevation had enunciated a contemptuous opinion of boiled beef, which had been traditionally handed down in Shepperton as the direct cause of his ultimate reduction to pauper commons. His calves were now shrunken, and his hair was gray without the aid of powder ; but he still carried his chin as if he were conscious of a stiff cravat ; he set his dilapidated hat on with a knowing inclination towards the left ear ; and when he was on field-work, he carted and uncarted the manure with a sort of flunkey grace, the ghost of that jaunty demeanour with which he used to usher in my lady's morning visitors. The flunkey nature was nowhere completely subdued but in his stomach, and he still divided society into gentry, gentry's flunkeys, and the people who provided for them. A clergyman without a flunkey was an anomaly, belonging to neither of these classes. Mr. Fitchett had an irrepressible tendency to drowsiness under spiritual instruction, and in the recurrent regularity with which he dozed off until he nodded and awaked himself, he looked not unlike a piece of mechanism, ingeniously contrived for measuring the length of Mr. Barton's discourse.

* * * * *

The snow was falling in thicker and thicker flakes, and already the vicarage garden was cloaked in white

as he passed through the gate Mrs. Barton heard him open the door, and ran out of the sitting-room to meet him.

" I'm afraid your feet are very wet, dear. What a terrible morning ! Let me take your hat. Your slippers are at the fire."

Mr. Barton was feeling a little cold and cross. It is difficult, when you have been doing disagreeable duties, without praise, on a snowy day, to attend to the very minor morals. So he showed no recognition of Milly's attentions, but simply said, " Fetch me my dressing-gown, will you ? "

" It *is* down, dear. I thought you wouldn't go into the study, because you said you would letter and number the books for the lending library. Patty and I have been covering them, and they are all ready in the sitting-room."

" Oh, I can't do those this morning," said Mr. Barton, as he took off his boots and put his feet into the slippers Milly had brought him ; " you must put them away into the parlour."

The sitting-room was also the day-nursery and schoolroom ; and, while mamma's back was turned, Dickey, the second boy, had insisted on superseding Chubby in the guidance of a headless horse, of the red-wafered species, which she was drawing round the room, so that when papa opened the door Chubby was giving tongue energetically.

" Milly, some of these children must go away. I want to be quiet."

" Yes, dear. Hush, Chubby ; go with Patty, and see what Nanny is getting for our dinner. Now, Fred and Sophy and Dickey, help me to carry these books into the parlour. There are three for Dickey. Carry them steadily."

[*Mr. and Mrs. Barton dine with the Countess Czerlaski and Mr. Bridmain.*]

Look at the two women on the sofa together! The large, fair, mild-eyed Milly is timid even in friendship: it is not easy to her to speak of the affection of which her heart is full. The lithe, dark, thin-lipped countess is racking her small brain for caressing words and charming exaggerations. . . .

"Well," continued the countess, "every one seems to agree in giving the precedence to Mr. Ely. For my part I *cannot* admire him. His preaching is too cold for me. It has no fervour—no heart. I often say to my brother, it is a great comfort to me that Shepperton Church is not too far off for us to go to; don't I, Edmund?"

"Yes," answered Mr. Bridmain; "they show us into such a bad pew at Milby—just where there is a draught from that door. I caught a stiff neck the first time I went there."

"Oh, it is the cold in the pulpit that affects me, not the cold in the pew. I was writing to my friend, Lady Porter, this morning, and telling her all about my feelings. She and I think alike on such matters. She is most anxious that when Sir William has an opportunity of giving away the living at their place, Dippley, they should have a thoroughly zealous clever man there. I have been describing a certain friend of mine to her, who, I think, would be just to her mind. And there is such a pretty rectory, Milly; shouldn't I like to see you the mistress of it?"

Milly smiled and blushed slightly. The Rev. Amos blushed very red, and gave a little embarrassed laugh—he could rarely keep his muscles within the limits of a smile.

[*The financial position of the Bartons grows worse, and Milly is ill. The Countess visits her in distress.*]

"What can be the matter, dear Caroline?"

Caroline threw down Jet, who gave a little yelp; then she threw her arms round Milly's neck, and began to sob; then she threw herself on the sofa, and begged for a glass of water; then she threw off her bonnet and shawl; and by the time Milly's imagination had exhausted itself in conjuring up calamities, she said—

"Dear, how shall I tell you? I am the most wretched woman. To be deceived by a brother to whom I have been so devoted—to see him degrading himself—giving himself utterly to the dogs!"

"What can it be?" said Milly, who began to picture to herself the sober Mr. Bridmain taking to brandy and betting.

"He is going to be married—to marry my own maid, that deceitful Alice, to whom I have been the most indulgent mistress. Did you ever hear of anything so disgraceful? so mortifying? so disreputable? . . . And now, Milly, I am come to throw myself on your charity for a week or two. *Will* you take me in?"

"That we will," said Milly, "if you will only put up with our poor rooms and way of living. It will be delightful to have you!"

[*The Countess's visit gives rise to suspicion among the parishioners.*]

"Mr. Barton may have attractions we don't know of," said Mr. Pilgrim, who piqued himself on a talent for sarcasm. "The countess has no maid now, and

they say Mr. Barton is handy in assisting at her toilette—laces her boots, and so forth."

"Tilette, be fiddled!" said Mrs. Hackit, with indignant boldness of metaphor; "an' there's that poor thing a-sewing her fingers to the bone for them children—an' another comin' on. What she must have to go through! It goes to my heart to turn my back on her. But she's i' the wrong to let herself be put upon i' that manner."

"Ah! I was talking to Mrs. Farquhar about that the other day. She said, 'I think Mrs. Barton a v-e-r-y w-e-a-k w-o-m-a-n.'" (Mr. Pilgrim gave this quotation with slow emphasis, as if he thought Mrs. Farquhar had uttered a remarkable sentiment.) "They find it impossible to invite her to their house while she has that equivocal person staying with her."

"Well!" remarked Miss Gibbs, "if I was a wife, nothing should induce me to bear what Mrs. Barton does."

"Yes, it's fine talking," said Mrs. Patten, from her pillow; "old maids' husbands are al'ys well managed. If you was a wife you'd be as foolish as your betters, belike."

* * * * *

But quite the heaviest pressure of the trouble fell on Milly—on gentle, uncomplaining Milly—whose delicate body was becoming daily less fit for all the many things that had to be done between rising up and lying down. At first, she thought the countess's visit would not last long, and she was quite glad to incur extra exertion for the sake of making her friend comfortable. I can hardly bear to think of all the rough work she did with those lovely hands—all by the sly, without letting her husband know anything about it, and husbands are not clairvoyant:

how she salted bacon, ironed shirts and cravats, put patches on patches, and re-darned darns. Then there was the task of mending and eking out baby-linen in prospect, and the problem perpetually suggesting itself how she and Nanny *should* manage when there was another baby, as there would be before very many months were past.

[*At length the Countess leaves. Mrs. Hackit, hearing that Mrs. Barton is ill, goes to the vicarage.*]

"When was your missis took worse?"

"O' Monday night. They sent for Dr. Madeley i' the middle o' the day yisterday, an' he's here again now."

"Is the baby alive?"

"No, it died last night. The children's all at Mrs. Bond's. She come and took 'em away last night, but the master says they must be fetched soon. He's upstairs now, wi' Dr. Madeley and Mr. Brand."

At this moment Mrs. Hackit heard the sound of a heavy, slow foot, in the passage; and presently Amos Barton entered, with dry, despairing eyes, haggard and unshaven. He expected to find the sitting-room as he left it, with nothing to meet his eyes but Milly's work-basket in the corner of the sofa, and the children's toys overturned in the bow-window. But when he saw Mrs. Hackit come towards him with answering sorrow in her face, the pent-up fountain of tears was opened; he threw himself on the sofa, hid his face, and sobbed aloud.

* * * * *

The chamber fronted the west; the sun was just setting, and the red light fell full upon the bed, where Milly lay with the hand of death visibly upon her.

The feather-bed had been removed, and she lay low on a mattress, with her head slightly raised by pillows. Her long fair neck seemed to be struggling with a painful effort; her features were pallid and pinched, and her eyes were closed. There was no one in the room but the nurse, and the mistress of the free school, who had come to give her help from the beginning of the change.

Amos and Mrs. Hackit stood beside the bed, and Milly opened her eyes.

"My darling, Mrs. Hackit is come to see you."

Milly smiled and looked at her with that strange, far-off look which belongs to ebbing life.

"Are the children coming?" she said painfully.

* * * * *

"Patty, I'm going away from you. Love your papa. Comfort him; and take care of your little brothers and sisters. God will help you."

Patty stood perfectly quiet, and said, "Yes, mamma."

The mother motioned with her pallid lips for the dear child to lean towards her and kiss her; and then Patty's great anguish overcame her, and she burst into sobs. Amos drew her towards him and pressed her head gently to him, while Milly beckoned Fred and Sophy, and said to them more faintly—

"Patty will try to be your mamma when I am gone, my darlings. You will be good, and not vex her."

They leaned towards her, and she stroked their fair heads, and kissed their tear-stained cheeks. They cried because mamma was ill and papa looked so unhappy; but they thought, perhaps next week things would be as they used to be again.

* * * * *

Amos knelt by the bed and held her hand in his. He did not believe in his sorrow. It was a bad dream. He did not know when she was gone. But Mr. Brand, whom Mrs. Hackit had sent for before twelve o'clock, thinking that Mr. Barton might probably need his help, now came up to him and said—

"She feels no more pain now. Come, my dear sir, come with me."

"She isn't *dead?*" shrieked the poor desolate man, struggling to shake off Mr. Brand, who had taken him by the arm. But his weary, weakened frame was not equal to resistance, and he was dragged out of the room.

* * * * *

The burial was over, and Amos turned with his children to re-enter the house—the house where, an hour ago, Milly's dear body lay, where the windows were half-darkened, and sorrow seemed to have a hallowed precinct for itself, shut out from the world. But now she was gone; the broad snow-reflected daylight was in all the rooms; the vicarage again seemed part of the common working-day world, and Amos, for the first time, felt that he was alone—that day after day, month after month, year after year, would have to be lived through without Milly's love. Spring would come, and she would not be there; summer, and she would not be there; and he would never have her again with him by the fireside in the long evenings. The seasons all seemed irksome to his thoughts; and how dreary the sunshiny days that would be sure to come! She was gone from him; and he could never show her his love any more, never make up for omissions in the past by filling future days with tenderness.

[*Amos Barton prepares to leave Shepperton.*]

Soon after ten o'clock, when he had sent Nanny to bed, that she might have a good night's rest before the fatigues of the morrow, he stole softly out to pay a last visit to Milly's grave. It was a moonless night, but the sky was thick with stars, and their light was enough to show that the grass had grown long on the grave, and that there was a tombstone telling in bright letters, on a dark ground, that beneath were deposited the remains of Amelia, the beloved wife of Amos Barton, who died in the thirty-fifth year of her age, leaving a husband and six children to lament her loss. The final words of the inscription were, " Thy will be done."

The husband was now advancing towards the dear mound from which he was so soon to be parted, perhaps for ever. He stood a few minutes reading over and over again the words on the tombstone, as if to assure himself that all the happy and unhappy past was a reality. For love is frightened at the intervals of insensibility and callousness that encroach by little and little on the dominion of grief, and it makes efforts to recall the keenness of the first anguish.

Gradually, as his eye dwelt on the words, " Amelia, the beloved wife," the waves of feeling swelled within his soul, and he threw himself on the grave, clasping it with his arms, and kissing the cold turf.

" Milly, Milly, dost thou hear me ? I didn't love thee enough—I wasn't tender enough to thee—but I think of it all now."

The sobs came and choked his utterance, and the warm tears fell.

Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story

[*Sir Christopher and Lady Cheverel are looking forward to the marriage of their nephew, Captain Wybrow. Caterina, their adopted daughter, lives with them, and Maynard Gilfil is chaplain.*]

Mr. Gilfil turned to Caterina and said—

"I like the view from this window better than any other in the house."

She made no answer, and he saw that her eyes were filling with tears; so he added, "Suppose we walk out a little; Sir Christopher and my lady seem to be occupied."

Caterina complied silently, and they turned down one of the gravel walks that led, after many windings under tall trees and among grassy openings, to a large inclosed flower-garden. Their walk was perfectly silent, for Maynard Gilfil knew that Caterina's thoughts were not with him, and she had been long used to make him endure the weight of those moods which she carefully hid from others.

[*Caterina sings.*]

But her emotion, instead of being a hindrance to her singing, gave her additional power. Her singing was what she could do best; it was her one point of superiority, in which it was probable she would excel the high-born beauty whom Anthony was to woo; and her love, her jealousy, her pride, her rebellion against her destiny, made one stream of passion which welled forth in the deep, rich tones of her voice. She had a rare contralto, which Lady Cheverel, who had a high musical taste, had been careful to preserve her from straining.

[*She goes out into the moonlight.*]

Suddenly a breath of warmth and roses seemed to float towards her, and an arm stole gently round her waist, while a soft hand took up her tiny fingers. Caterina felt an electric thrill, and was motionless for one long moment; then she pushed away the arm and hand, and, turning round, lifted up to the face that hung over her eyes full of tenderness and reproach. The fawn-like unconsciousness was gone, and in that one look were the ground tones of poor little Caterina's nature—intense love and fierce jealousy.

"Why do you push me away, Tina?" said Captain Wybrow in a half-whisper; "are you angry with me for what a hard fate puts upon me? Would you have me cross my uncle—who has done so much for us both—in his dearest wish? You know I have duties—we both have duties—before which feeling must be sacrificed."

"Yes, yes," said Caterina, stamping her foot, and turning away her head; "don't tell me what I know already." . . .

"Don't let us part in anger, Tina. All this may pass away. It's as likely as not that I may never marry any one at all. These palpitations may carry me off, and you may have the satisfaction of knowing that I shall never be anybody's bridegroom. Who knows what may happen? I may be my own master before I get into the bonds of holy matrimony, and be able to choose my little singing-bird. Why should we distress ourselves before the time?"

"It is easy to talk so when you are not feeling," said Caterina, the tears flowing fast. "It is bad to

bear now, whatever may come after. But you don't care about my misery."

"Don't I, Tina?" said Anthony, in his tenderest tones, again stealing his arm round her waist and drawing her towards him. Poor Tina was the slave of this voice and touch. Grief and resentment, retrospect and foreboding, vanished—all life before and after melted away in the bliss of that moment, as Anthony pressed his lips to hers.

[*Miss Assher comes to stay at Cheverel Manor.*]

Captain Wybrow was leaning against the mantelpiece, contenting himself with responding from under his indolent eyelids to the glances Miss Assher was constantly directing towards him as she spoke. "She is very much in love with him," thought Caterina. But she was relieved that Anthony remained passive in his attentions. She thought, too, that he was looking paler and more languid than usual. "If he didn't love her very much—if he sometimes thought of the past with regret, I think I could bear it all, and be glad to see Sir Christopher made happy."

* * * * *

When the singing was over, Sir Christopher and Lady Cheverel sat down to whist with Lady Assher and Mr. Gilfil, and Caterina placed herself at the baronet's elbow, as if to watch the game, that she might not appear to thrust herself on the pair of lovers. At first she was glowing with her little triumph, and felt the strength of pride; but her eye *would* steal to the opposite side of the fireplace, where Captain Wybrow had seated himself close to Miss Assher, and was leaning with his arm over the back of the chair, in the most lover-like position. Caterina

began to feel a choking sensation. She could see, almost without looking, that he was taking up her arm to examine her bracelet; their heads were bending close together, her curls touching his cheek —now he was putting his lips to her hand. Caterina felt her cheeks burn—she could sit no longer. She got up, pretended to be gliding about in search of something, and at length slipped out of the room.

Outside, she took a candle, and, hurrying along the passages and up the stairs to her own room, locked the door.

"Oh, I cannot bear it, I cannot bear it!" the poor thing burst out aloud, clasping her little fingers, and pressing them back against her forehead, as if she wanted to break them.

* * * * *

How dreary the moonlight is! robbed of all its tenderness and repose by the hard driving wind. The trees are harassed by that tossing motion, when they would like to be at rest; the shivering grass makes her quake with sympathetic cold; and the willows by the pool, bent low and white under that invisible harshness, seem agitated and helpless like herself. But she loves the scene the better for its sadness: there is some pity in it. It is not like that hard, unfeeling happiness of lovers, flaunting in the eyes of misery.

[*Caterina and Captain Wybrow are alone.*]

At this moment the door opened, and Miss Assher entered, to fetch her reticule, which lay on the harpsichord. She gave a keen glance at Caterina, whose face was flushed, and saying to Captain Wybrow with a slight sneer, "Since you are so chill I wonder

you like to sit in the window," left the room again immediately.

The lover did not appear much discomposed, but sat quiet a little longer, and then, seating himself on the music-stool, drew it near to Caterina, and, taking her hand, said, "Come, Tina, look kindly at me, and let us be friends. I shall always be your friend."

"Thank you," said Caterina, drawing away her hand. "You are very generous. But pray move away. Miss Assher may come in again."

"Miss Assher be hanged!" said Anthony, feeling the fascination of old habit returning on him in his proximity to Caterina. He put his arm round her waist, and leaned his cheek down to hers. The lips couldn't help meeting after that; but the next moment, with heart swelling and tears rising, Caterina burst away from him, and rushed out of the room.

[*Mr. Gilfil warns Caterina that Miss Assher observes her.*]

"Forgive me, Caterina, for intruding on your feelings in this way. I was so afraid you might not be aware how Miss Assher watched you. Remember, I entreat you, that the peace of the whole family depends on your power of governing yourself. Only say you forgive me before I go."

"Dear, good Maynard," she said, stretching out her little hand, and taking two of his large fingers in her grasp, while her tears flowed fast; "I am very cross to you. But my heart is breaking. I don't know what I do. Good-bye."

He stooped down, kissed the little hand, and then left the room.

"The cursed scoundrel!" he muttered between his teeth, as he closed the door behind him.

[*Captain Wybrow prompts Sir Christopher to arrange a wedding between Caterina and Mr. Gilfil. Caterina learns of this.*]

"If I could speak to him," she whispered, "and tell him I hate him, I despise him, I loathe him!"

Suddenly, as if a new thought had struck her, she drew a key from her pocket, and, unlocking an inlaid desk where she stored up her keepsakes, took from it a small miniature. It was in a very slight gold frame, with a ring to it, as if intended to be worn on a chain; and under the glass at the back were two locks of hair, one dark and the other auburn, arranged in a fantastic knot. It was Anthony's secret present to her a year ago—a copy he had had made specially for her. For the last month she had not taken it from its hiding-place: there was no need to heighten the vividness of the past. But now she clutched it fiercely, and dashed it across the room against the bare hearthstone.

Will she crush it under her feet, and grind it under her high-heeled shoe, till every trace of those false, cruel features is gone?

Ah, no! She rushed across the room; but when she saw the little treasure she had cherished so fondly, so often smothered with kisses, so often laid under her pillow, and remembered with the first return of consciousness in the morning—when she saw this one visible relic of the too happy past lying with the glass shivered, the hair fallen out, the thin ivory cracked, there was a revulsion of the overstrained feeling: relenting came, and she burst into tears.

Look at her stooping down to gather up her treasure, searching for the hair and replacing it, and then mournfully examining the crack that disfigures the once-loved image. Alas! there is no glass now to guard either the hair or the portrait; but see how carefully she wraps delicate paper round it, and locks it up again in its old place. Poor child! God send the relenting may always come before the worst irrevocable deed!

[*Miss Assher and Caterina talk together.*]

"I cannot even understand how a woman can indulge a passion for a man who has never given her the least ground for it, as Captain Wybrow assures me is the case."

"He told you that, did he?" said Caterina, in clear, low tones, her lips turning white as she rose from her chair.

"Yes, indeed, he did. He was bound to tell it me after your strange behaviour."

Caterina said nothing, but turned round suddenly and left the room.

See how she rushes noiselessly, like a pale meteor, along the passages and up the gallery stairs! Those gleaming eyes, those bloodless lips, that swift, silent tread, make her look like the incarnation of a fierce purpose, rather than a woman. The mid-day sun is shining on the armour in the gallery, making mimic suns on bossed sword-hilts and the angles of polished breastplates. Yes, there are sharp weapons in the gallery. There is a dagger in that cabinet; she knows it well. And as a dragon-fly wheels in its

flight to alight for an instant on a leaf, she darts to the cabinet, takes out the dagger, and thrusts it into her pocket. In three minutes more she is out, in hat and cloak, on the gravel-walk, hurrying along towards the thick shades of the distant rookery. She threads the windings of the plantations, not feeling the golden leaves that rain upon her, not feeling the earth beneath her feet. Her hand is in her pocket, clenching the handle of the dagger, which she holds half out of its sheath.

She has reached the rookery, and is under the gloom of the interlacing boughs. Her heart throbs as if it would burst her bosom—as if every next leap must be its last. Wait, wait, O heart!—till she has done this one deed. He will be there—he will be before her in a moment. He will come towards her with that false smile, thinking she does not know his baseness—she will plunge that dagger into his heart.

Poor child! poor child! she who used to cry to have the fish put back into the water—who never willingly killed the smallest living thing—dreams now, in the madness of her passion, that she can kill the man whose very voice unnerves her.

But what is that lying among the dank leaves on the path three yards before her?

Good God! it is he—lying motionless—his hat fallen off. He is ill, then—he has fainted. Her hand lets go the dagger, and she rushes towards him. His eyes are fixed; he does not see her. She sinks down on her knees, takes the dear head in her arms, and kisses the cold forehead.

"Anthony, Anthony! speak to me—it is Tina—speak to me! O God, he is dead!"

[*The next day Caterina runs away, and her friends search for her in vain. The funeral of Captain Wybrow takes place, and still there is no sign of Caterina. At length a man comes to say that she has taken refuge with his wife.*]

" However, Dorkis got her to bed, and there she's lay iver sin', stoopid like, an' niver speaks, an' on'y teks little bits an' sups when Dorkis coaxes her. An' we begun to be frightened, and couldn't think what had made her come away from the manor, and Dorkis was afeared there was summat wrong. So this mornin' she could hold no longer, an' would hev no nay but I must come an' see ; an' so I've rode twenty mile upo' Blackbird, as thinks all the while he's a-ploughin', an' turns sharp roun', every thirty yards, as if he was at the end of a furrow. I've hed a sore time wi' him, I can tell you, sir."

[*Mr. Gilfil hurries to where Caterina is.*]

She looked younger than she really was, and any one seeing the tiny face and hands for the first time might have thought they belonged to a little girl of twelve, who was being taken away from coming instead of past sorrow.

When Mr. Gilfil advanced and stood opposite to her, the light fell full upon his face. A slight startled expression came over Caterina's eyes ; she looked at him earnestly for a few moments, then lifted up her hand as if to beckon him to stoop down towards her, and whispered " Maynard ! "

He seated himself on the bed, and stooped down towards her. She whispered again—

"Maynard, did you see the dagger?"

He followed his first impulse in answering her, and it was a wise one.

"Yes," he whispered; "I found it in your pocket, and put it back again in the cabinet."

* * * * *

The cocks began to crow; the gate swung; there was a tramp of footsteps in the yard, and Mr. Gilfil heard Dorcas stirring. These sounds seemed to affect Caterina, for she looked anxiously at him and said, "Maynard, are you going away?"

"No, I shall stay here at Callam until you are better, and then you will go away too."

"Never to the manor again; oh, no! I shall live poorly, and get my own bread."

"Well, dearest, you shall do what you would like best. But I wish you could go to sleep now. Try to rest quietly, and by and by you will perhaps sit up a little. God has kept you in life in spite of all this sorrow; it will be sinful not to try to make the best of His gift.—Dear Tina, you *will* try. And little Bessie brought you some crocuses once; you didn't notice the poor little thing; but you will notice her when she comes again, will you not?"

"I will try," whispered Tina humbly, and then closed her eyes.

* * * * *

In less than a week from that time, Caterina was persuaded to travel in a comfortable carriage, under the care of Mr. Gilfil and his sister, Mrs. Heron, whose soft blue eyes and mild manners were very soothing to the poor bruised child—the more so as they had an air of sisterly equality which was quite new to her. . . .

Maynard was almost angry with himself for feeling

happy while Tina's mind and body were still trembling on the verge of irrecoverable decline; but the new delight of acting as her guardian angel, of being with her every hour of the day, of devising everything for her comfort, of watching for a ray of returning interest in her eyes, was too absorbing to leave room for alarm or regret.

* * * * *

Caterina was singing the very air from the "*Orfeo*" which we heard her singing so many months ago at the beginning of her sorrows. It was "*Che faro,*" Sir Christopher's favourite, and its notes seemed to carry on their wings all the tenderest memories of her life, when Cheverel Manor was still an untroubled home. The long, happy days of childhood and girlhood recovered all their rightful predominance over the short interval of sin and sorrow.

She paused, and burst into tears—the first tears she had shed since she had been at Foxholm. Maynard could not help hurrying towards her, putting his arm round her, and leaning down to kiss her hair. She nestled to him, and put up her little mouth to be kissed.

The delicate-tendrilled plant must have something to cling to. The soul that was born anew to music was born anew to love.

[*Mr. Gilfil and Caterina are married, but after some months Caterina dies.*]

Janet's Repentance

[*Mr. Dempster, a lawyer, is the chief of the townspeople to protest against the innovation of evening lectures which Mr. Tryan, the new curate, proposes to deliver. Mr. Dempster and his colleagues celebrate the delivery of their formal protest by drinking. Mr. Dempster returns home.*]

There was a large, heavy knocker on the green door, and though Mr. Dempster carried a latch-key, he sometimes chose to use the knocker. He chose to do so now. The thunder resounded through Orchard Street, and, after a single minute, there was a second clap louder than the first. Another minute, and still the door was not opened; whereupon Mr. Dempster, muttering, took out his latch-key, and, with less difficulty than might have been expected, thrust it into the door. When he opened the door the passage was dark.

"Janet!" in the loudest rasping tone, was the next sound that rang through the house.

"Janet!" again—before a slow step was heard on the stairs, and a distant light began to flicker on the wall of the passage.

"Curse you! you creeping idiot! Come faster, can't you?"

Yet a few seconds, and the figure of a tall woman, holding aslant a heavy-plated drawing-room candlestick, appeared at the turning of the passage that led to the broader entrance. . . .

Her wide open black eyes have a strangely fixed, sightless gaze, as she pauses at the turning, and stands silent before her husband.

"I'll teach you to keep me waiting in the dark, you pale, staring fool!" he said, advancing with his slow, drunken step. "What, you've been drinking again, have you? I'll beat you into your senses."

He laid his hand with a firm grip on her shoulder, turned her round, and pushed her slowly before him along the passage and through the dining-room door, which stood open on their left hand.

There was a portrait of Janet's mother, a gray-haired, dark-eyed old woman, in a neatly fluted cap, hanging over the mantel-piece. Surely the aged eyes take on a look of anguish as they see Janet—not trembling, no! it would be better if she trembled—standing stupidly unmoved in her great beauty, while the heavy arm is lifted to strike her. The blow falls—another—and another. Surely the mother hears that cry—"O Robert! pity! pity!"

[*The Bishop is coming to the town to give Confirmation, and will decide whether the evening lectures shall take place. Janet visits her mother.*]

"You will come to church, mother?"

"Yes, my dear, I wouldn't lose such a pretty sight. It does my old eyes good to see so many fresh young faces. Is your husband going?"

"Yes, Robert will be there. I've made him as neat as a new pin this morning, and he says the bishop will think him too buckish by half. I took him into Mammy Dempster's room to show himself. We hear Tryan is making sure of the bishop's support; but we shall see. I would give my crooked guinea, and all the luck it will ever bring me, to have him beaten, for I can't endure the sight of the man coming to harass dear old Mr. and Mrs. Crewe in

their last days. Preaching the Gospel indeed! That is the best Gospel that makes everybody happy and comfortable, isn't it, mother?"

"Ah, child, I'm afraid there's no Gospel will do that here below."

"Well, I can do something to comfort Mrs. Crewe, at least; so give me a kiss, and good-bye till church-time."

The mother leaned back in her chair when Janet was gone, and sank into a painful reverie. . . . Janet looked glad and tender now—but what scene of misery was coming next? She was too like the cistus flowers in the little garden before the window, that, with the shades of evening, might lie with the delicate white and glossy dark of their petals trampled in the roadside dust. When the sun had sunk, and the twilight was deepening, Janet might be sitting there, heated, maddened, sobbing out her griefs with selfish passion, and wildly wishing herself dead.

[*The Bishop decides in favour of Mr. Tryan. Mr. Dempster continues to lead the campaign against him, and the feeling of the town is divided. Mr. Tryan works indefatigably, in spite of illness and discouragement. Dempster drinks more than ever.*]

Poor Janet! how heavily the months rolled on for her, laden with fresh sorrows as the summer passed into autumn, the autumn into winter, and the winter into spring again. Every feverish morning, with its blank listlessness and despair, seemed more hateful than the last; every coming night more impossible to brave without arming herself in leaden stupor. The morning light brought no gladness to her: it seemed only to throw its glare on what had

happened in the dim candle-light—on the cruel man seated immovable in drunken obstinacy by the dead fire and dying lights in the dining-room, rating her in harsh tones, reiterating old reproaches—or on a hideous blank of something unremembered, something that must have made that dark bruise on her shoulder, which ached as she dressed herself.

[*Janet offends her husband.*]

"So you think you'll defy me, do you? We'll see how long that will last. Get up, madam; out of bed this instant!"

In the close presence of the dreadful man—of this huge, crushing force, armed with savage will—poor Janet's desperate defiance all forsook her, and her terrors came back. Trembling she got up, and stood helpless in her night-dress before her husband.

He seized her with his heavy grasp by the shoulder, and pushed her before him.

"I'll cool your hot spirit for you! I'll teach you to brave me!"

Slowly he pushed her along before him, downstairs and through the passage, where a small oil-lamp was still flickering. What was he going to do to her? She thought every moment he was going to dash her before him on the ground. But she gave no scream—she only trembled.

He pushed her on to the entrance, and held her firmly in his grasp while he lifted the latch of the door. Then he opened the door a little way, thrust her out, and slammed it behind her.

For a short space, it seemed like a deliverance to Janet. The harsh north-east wind, that blew through

her thin night-dress, and sent her long, heavy, black hair streaming, seemed like the breath of pity after the grasp of that threatening monster. But soon the sense of release from an overpowering terror gave way before the sense of the fate that had really come upon her.

[*She finds refuge with a friend. The next day she sends for Mr. Tryan.*]

They sat down opposite each other, and she said in a low voice, while slow, difficult tears gathered in her aching eyes—

"I want to tell you how unhappy I am—how weak and wicked. I feel no strength to live or die. I thought you could tell me something that would help me." She paused.

"Perhaps I can," Mr. Tryan said, "for in speaking to me you are speaking to a fellow-sinner who has needed just the comfort and help you are needing."

"And you did find it?"

"Yes; and I trust you will find it."

* * * * *

Janet's dark grand face, still fatigued, had become quite calm, and looked up, as she sat, with a humble, childlike expression at the thin blonde face and slightly sunken gray eyes which now shone with hectic brightness. She might have been taken for an image of passionate strength beaten and worn with conflict; and he for an image of the self-renouncing faith which has soothed that conflict into rest. As he looked at the sweet, submissive face, he remembered its look of despairing anguish, and his heart was very full as he turned away from her. "Let me only live to see this work confirmed, and then——"

[*Janet summons her mother.*]

When they entered the parlour, Janet, wearied out, had sunk to sleep in the large chair, which stood with its back to the door. The noise of the opening door disturbed her, and she was looking round wonderingly, when Mrs. Raynor came up to her chair, and said, " It's your mother, Janet."

" Mother, dear mother ! " Janet cried, clasping her closely. " I have not been a good, tender child to you, but I *will* be—I will not grieve you any more."

The calmness which had withstood a new sorrow was overcome by a new joy, and the mother burst into tears.

[*The next day.*]

But as evening approached, Janet's morning heroism all forsook her : her imagination, influenced by physical depression as well as by mental habits, was haunted by the vision of her husband's return home, and she began to shudder with the yesterday's dread. She heard him calling her, she saw him going to her mother's to look for her, she felt sure he would find her out, and burst in upon her.

" Pray, pray, don't leave me, don't go to church," she said to Mrs. Pettifer. " You and mother both stay with me till Mr. Tryan comes."

At twenty minutes past six the church-bells were ringing for the evening service, and soon the congregation was streaming along Orchard Street in the mellow sunset. The street opened towards the west. The red, half-sunken sun shed a solemn splendour

on the everyday houses, and crimsoned the windows of Dempster's projecting upper storey.

Suddenly a loud murmur arose and spread along the stream of church-goers, and one group after another paused and looked backward. At the far end of the street, men, accompanied by a miscellaneous group of onlookers, were slowly carrying something —a body stretched on a door. Slowly they passed along the middle of the street, lined all the way with awe-struck faces, till they turned aside and paused in the red sunlight before Dempster's door.

It is Dempster's body. No one knows whether he is alive or dead.

* * * * *

Janet having paid her visit in Butcher Lane, turned again into Orchard Street on her way to Mrs. Crewe's, and was thinking, rather sadly, that her mother's economical housekeeping would leave no abundant surplus to be sent to the hungry Lakins, when she saw Mr. Pilgrim in advance of her on the other side of the street. He was walking at a rapid pace, and when he reached Dempster's door he turned and entered without knocking.

Janet was startled. Mr. Pilgrim would never enter in that way unless there were some one very ill in the house. It was her husband; she felt certain of it at once. Something had happened to him. Without a moment's pause, she ran across the street, opened the door, and entered. There was no one in the passage. The dining-room door was wide open—no one was there. Mr. Pilgrim, then, was already upstairs. She rushed up at once to Dempster's room—her own room. The door was open, and she paused in pale horror at the sight before her, which seemed to stand out only with the more

appalling distinctness because the noonday light was darkened to twilight in the chamber.

Two strong nurses were using their utmost force to hold Dempster in bed, while the medical assistant was applying a sponge to his head, and Mr. Pilgrim was busy adjusting some apparatus in the background. Dempster's face was purple and swollen, his eyes dilated, and fixed with a look of dire terror on something he seemed to see approaching him from the iron closet. He trembled violently, and struggled as if to jump out of bed.

* * * * *

When the first heart-piercing hours were over—when her horror at his delirium was no longer fresh, she began to be conscious of her relief from the burthen of decision as to her future course. The question that agitated her, about returning to her husband, had been solved in a moment ; and this illness, after all, might be the herald of another blessing, just as that dreadful midnight, when she stood an outcast in cold and darkness, had been followed by the dawn of a new hope. Robert would get better ; this illness might alter him ; he would be a long time feeble, needing help, walking with a crutch, perhaps. She would wait on him with such tenderness, such all-forgiving love, that the old harshness and cruelty must melt away for ever under the heart-sunshine she would pour around him. Her bosom heaved at the thought, and delicious tears fell. Janet's was a nature in which hatred and revenge could find no place ; the long, bitter years drew half their bitterness from her ever-living remembrance of the too short years of love that went before ; and the thought that her husband would ever put her hand to his lips again, and recall the day when they sat on the grass to-

gether, and he laid scarlet poppies on her black hair, and called her his gypsy queen, seemed to send a tide of loving oblivion over all the harsh and stony space they had traversed since. The Divine Love that had already shone upon her would be with her; she would lift up her soul continually for help; Mr. Tryan, she knew, would pray for her. If she felt herself failing, she would confess it to him at once; if her feet began to slip, there was that stay for her to cling to. Oh, she could never be drawn back into that cold, damp vault of sin and despair again; she had felt the morning sun, she had tasted the sweet, pure air of trust and penitence and submission.

* * * * *

Suddenly a slight movement, like the passing away of a shadow, was visible in his face, and he opened his eyes full on Janet.

It was almost like meeting him again on the resurrection morning, after the night of the grave.

"Robert, do you know me?"

He kept his eyes fixed on her, and there was a faintly perceptible motion of the lips, as if he wanted to speak.

But the moment of speech was for ever gone—the moment for asking pardon of her, if he wanted to ask it. Could he read the full forgiveness that was written in her eyes? She never knew; for, as she was bending to kiss him, the thick veil of death fell between them, and her lips touched a corpse.

[*About a month after her husband's death, Janet is tempted again.*]

An impetuous desire shook Janet through all her members; it seemed to master her with the inevitable force of strong fumes that flood our senses before

we are aware. Her hand was on the decanter; pale and excited, she was lifting it out of its niche, when, with a start and a shudder, she dashed it to the ground, and the room was filled with the odour of the spirit. Without staying to shut up the bureau, she rushed out of the room, snatched up her bonnet and mantle which lay in the dining-room, and hurried out of the house. Where should she go? In what place would this demon that had re-entered her be scared back again.

[*She goes to Mr. Tryan.*]

So she went out into the dewy starlight; and as Mr. Tryan turned away from her, he felt a stronger wish than ever that his fragile life might last out for him to see Janet's restoration thoroughly established—to see her no longer fleeing, struggling, clinging up the steep sides of a precipice whence she might be any moment hurled back into the depths of despair, but walking firmly on the level ground of habit. He inwardly resolved that nothing but a peremptory duty should ever take him from Milby—that he would not cease to watch over her until life forsook him.

Janet walked on quickly till she turned into the fields; then she slackened her pace a little, enjoying the sense of solitude which a few hours before had been intolerable to her. The Divine Presence did not now seem far off, where she had not wings to reach it; prayer itself seemed superfluous in those moments of calm trust. The temptation which had so lately made her shudder before the possibilities of the future was now a source of confidence; for had she not been delivered from it? Had not rescue

come in the extremity of danger? Yes; Infinite Love was caring for her. She felt like a little child whose hand is firmly grasped by its father, as its frail limbs make their way over the rough ground: if it should stumble, the father will not let it go.

That walk in the dewy starlight remained for ever in Janet's memory as one of those baptismal epochs, when the soul, dipped in the sacred waters of joy and peace, rises from them with new energies, with more unalterable longings.

[*Janet nurses Mr. Tryan in his illness.*]

"Janet," he said presently, in his faint voice—he always called her Janet now. In a moment she was close to him, bending over him. He opened his hand as he looked up at her, and she placed hers within it.

"Janet," he said again, "you will have a long while to live after I am gone."

A sudden pang of fear shot through her. She thought he felt himself dying, and she sank on her knees at his feet, holding his hand, while she looked up at him, almost breathless.

"But you will not feel the need of me as you have done. . . . You have a sure trust in God . . . I shall not look for you in vain at the last."

"No . . . no . . . I shall be there . . . God will not forsake me."

She could hardly utter the words, though she was not weeping. She was waiting with trembling eagerness for anything else he might have to say.

"Let us kiss each other before we part."

She lifted up her face to his, and the full life-breathing lips met the wasted dying ones in a sacred kiss of promise.

* * * * *

When Janet left the grave, she did not return to Holly Mount; she went to her home in Orchard Street, where her mother was waiting to receive her. She said quite calmly, "Let us walk round the garden, mother." And they walked round in silence, with their hands clasped together, looking at the golden crocuses bright in the spring sunshine. Janet felt a deep stillness within. She thirsted for no pleasure; she craved no worldly good. She saw the years to come stretch before her like an autumn afternoon, filled with resigned memory. Life to her could never more have any eagerness; it was a solemn service of gratitude and patient effort. She walked in the presence of unseen witnesses—of the Divine Love that had rescued her, of the human love that waited for its eternal repose until it had seen her endure to the end.

Adam Bede

[*Adam and Seth Bede are two young men employed in Mr. Burge's carpenter's-shop.*]

ALL hands worked on in silence for some minutes, until the church clock began to strike six. Before the first stroke had died away, Sandy Jim had loosed his plane and was reaching his jacket; Wiry Ben had left a screw half driven in, and thrown his screwdriver into his tool-basket; Mum Taft, who, true to his name, had kept silence throughout the previous conversation, had flung down his hammer as he was in the act of lifting it; and Seth, too, had straightened his back, and was putting out his hand towards his paper cap. Adam alone had gone on with his work as if nothing had happened. But observing the cessation of the tools, he looked up, and said, in a tone of indignation—

"Look there, now! I can't abide to see men throw away their tools i' that way, the minute the clock begins to strike, as if they took no pleasure i' their work, and was afraid o' doing a stroke too much."

Seth looked a little conscious, and began to be slower in his preparations for going, but Mum Taft broke silence, and said—

"Ay, ay, Adam lad, ye talk like a young un. When y' are six an' forty like me, istid o' six an' twenty, ye wonna be so flush o' workin' for nought."

"Nonsense," said Adam, still wrathful; "what's

age got to do with it, I wonder? Ye arena getting stiff yet, I reckon. I hate to see a man's arms drop down as if he was shot, before the clock's fairly struck, just as if he'd never a bit o' pride and delight in 's work. The very grindstone 'ull go on turning a bit after you loose it."

[*Adam goes home, and Seth to hear Dinah Morris, the Methodist, preach on the village-green.*]

She held no book in her ungloved hands, but let them hang down lightly crossed before her, as she stood and turned her gray eyes on the people. There was no keenness in the eyes; they seemed rather to be shedding love than making observations; they had the liquid look which tells that the mind is full of what it has to give out, rather than impressed by external objects. She stood with her left hand towards the descending sun, and leafy boughs screened her from its rays; but in this sober light the delicate colouring of her face seemed to gather a calm vividness, like flowers at evening.

[*As Seth walks home with Dinah he asks her to marry him. She has no wish for marriage, but rather feels drawn to return to the bleak town, Snowfield, where she works in a factory, and ministers to the poor and unhappy.*]

"Well, Dinah, I must seek for strength to bear it, and to endure as seeing Him who is invisible. But I feel now how weak my faith is. It seems as if, when you are gone, I could never joy in anything any more. I think it's something passing the love of women as I feel for you, for I could be content

without your marrying me if I could go and live at Snowfield, and be near you. I trusted as the strong love God had given me towards you was a leading for us both ; but it seems it was only meant for my trial."

[*Adam returns in the evening to his home.*]

The door of the house is open, and an elderly woman is looking out ; but she is not placidly contemplating the evening sunshine ; she has been watching with dim eyes the gradually enlarging speck which for the last few minutes she has been quite sure is her darling son Adam. Lisbeth Bede loves her son with the love of a woman to whom her first-born has come late in life. She is an anxious, spare, yet vigorous old woman, clean as a snowdrop.

* * * * *

" Well, my lad, it's gone seven by th' clock. Thee't allays stay till the last child's born. Thee wants thy supper, I'll warrand. Where's Seth ? gone arter some o' 's chapellin, I reckon ? "

" Ay, ay, Seth's at no harm, mother, thee mayst be sure. But where's father ? " said Adam quickly, as he entered the house and glanced into the room on the left hand, which was used as a workshop. " Hasn't he done the coffin for Tholer ? There's the stuff standing just as I left it this morning."

" Done the coffin ? " said Lisbeth, following him, and knitting uninterruptedly, though she looked at her son very anxiously. " Eh, my lad, he went aff to Treddles'on this forenoon, an 's niver come back. I doubt he's got to th' Waggin Overthrow' again."

A deep flush of anger passed rapidly over Adam's

face. He said nothing, but threw off his jacket, and began to roll up his shirt-sleeves again.

"What art goin' to do, Adam?" said the mother, with a tone and look of alarm. "Thee wouldstna go to work again, wi'out ha'in' thy bit o' supper?"

Adam, too angry to speak, walked into the workshop. But his mother threw down her knitting, and, hurrying after him, took hold of his arm, and said in a tone of plaintive remonstrance—

"Nay, my lad, my lad, thee munna go wi'out thy supper; there's the taters wi' the gravy in 'em, just as thee lik'st 'em. I saved 'em o' purpose for thee. Come an' ha' thy supper, come."

"Let be!" said Adam, impetuously, shaking her off, and seizing one of the planks that stood against the wall. "It's fine talking about having supper when here's a coffin promised to be ready at Brox'on by seven o'clock to-morrow morning, and ought to ha' been there now, and not a nail struck yet. My throat's too full to swallow victuals."

"Why, thee canstna get the coffin ready," said Lisbeth. "Thee 't work thyself to death. It 'ud take thee all night to do 't."

"What signifies how long it takes me? Isn't the coffin promised? Can they bury the man without a coffin? I'd work my right hand off sooner than deceive people with lies i' that way. It makes me mad to think on 't. I shall overrun these doings before long. I've stood enough of 'em."

[*Seth comes home.*]

"Why, mother," he said, "how is it as father's working so late?"

"It's none o' thy feyther as is a-workin'—thee

might know that well anoof if thy head warna full o' chapellin'—it's thy brother as does iverything, for there's niver anybody else i' th' way to do nothin'."

Lisbeth was going on, for she was not at all afraid of Seth, and usually poured into his ears all the querulousness which was repressed by her awe of Adam. Seth had never in his life spoken a harsh word to his mother, and timid people always wreak their peevishness on the gentle. But Seth, with an anxious look, had passed into the workshop, and said—

"Addy, how's this? What! father's forgot the coffin?"

"Ay, lad, th' old tale; but I shall get it done," said Adam, looking up, and casting one of his bright, keen glances at his brother. "Why, what's the matter with thee? Thee 't in trouble."

Seth's eyes were red, and there was a look of deep depression on his mild face.

"Yes, Addy, but it's what must be borne, and can't be helped. Why, thee 'st never been to the school, then?"

"School? no; that screw can wait," said Adam, hammering away again.

"Let me take my turn now, and do thee go to bed," said Seth.

"No, lad, I'd rather go on, now I'm in harness. Thee 't help me to carry it to Brox'on when it's done. I'll call thee up at sunrise. Go and eat thy supper, and shut the door, so as I mayn't hear mother's talk."

Seth knew that Adam always meant what he said, and was not to be persuaded into meaning anything else. So he turned, with rather a heavy heart, into the house-place.

" Adam's niver touched a bit o' victual sin' home he's come," said Lisbeth. " I reckon thee 'st hed thy supper at some o' thy Methody folks."

" Nay, mother," said Seth, " I've had no supper yet."

" Come, then," said Lisbeth, " but donna thee ate the taters, for Adam 'ull happen ate 'em if I leave 'em stannin'. He loves a bit o' taters an' gravy. But he's been so sore an' angered, he wouldn't ate 'em, for all I'd putten 'em by o' purpose for him. An' he's been a threatenin' to go away agin," she went on, whimpering, " an' I'm fast sure he'll go some dawnin' afore I'm up, an' niver let me know aforehand, an' he'll never come back again when once he's gone. An' I'd better niver ha' had a son, as is like no other body's son for the deftness an' th' handiness, an' so looked on by th' grit folks, an' tall an' upright like a poplar tree, an' me to be parted from him, an' niver see 'm no more."

[*The next morning Adam and Seth go early to deliver the coffin. On their way back they find their father dead in the brook. Lisbeth is at home, preparing their breakfast.*]

" The lads 'ull be fine an' hungry," she said, half aloud, as she stirred the porridge. " It's a good step to Brox'on, an' it's hungry air o'er the hill—wi' that heavy coffin too. Eh! it's heavier now, wi' poor Bob Tholer in't. Howiver, I've made a drap more porridge nor common this mornin'. The feyther 'ull happen come in arter a bit. Not as he'll ate much porridge. He swallers sixpennorth o' ale an' saves a hap'orth o' porridge—that's his way o' laying by

money, as I've told him many a time, an' I'm likely to tell him again afore the day's out. Eh! poor mon, he takes it quiet enough; there's no denyin' that."

But now Lisbeth heard the heavy "thud" of a running footstep on the turf, and, turning quickly towards the door, she saw Adam enter, looking so pale and overwhelmed that she screamed aloud and rushed towards him before he had time to speak.

"Hush, mother," Adam said, rather hoarsely, "don't be frightened. Father's tumbled into the water. Belike we may bring him round again. Seth and me are going to carry him in. Get a blanket, and make it hot at the fire."

In reality Adam was convinced that his father was dead, but he knew there was no other way of repressing his mother's impetuous wailing grief than by occupying her with some active task which had hope in it.

He ran back to Seth, and the two sons lifted the sad burthen in heart-stricken silence. The wide-open glazed eyes were gray, like Seth's, and had once looked with mild pride on the boys before whom Thias had lived to hang his head in shame. Seth's chief feeling was awe and distress at this sudden snatching away of his father's soul; but Adam's mind rushed back over the past in a flood of relenting and pity. When death, the great Reconciler, has come, it is never our tenderness that we repent of, but our severity.

[*Mr. Irwine, Rector of Broxton, Vicar of Hayslope, and Vicar of Blythe, lives with his mother and two sisters at Broxton Parsonage. He and Arthur Donnithorne, Squire Donnithorne's grandson and heir, and a captain in the militia, ride together to Hall Farm, the home of the Poysers. Mrs. Poyser's niece, Dinah Morris, is staying there; and Mr. Poyser's niece, Hetty Sorrel, lives there.*]

Surely nowhere else could an oak clock-case and an oak table have got to such a polish by the hand: genuine "elbow polish," as Mrs. Poyser called it, for she thanked God she never had any of your varnished rubbish in her house. Hetty Sorrel often took the opportunity, when her aunt's back was turned, of looking at the pleasing reflection of herself in those polished surfaces, for the oak table was usually turned up like a screen, and was more for ornament than for use; and she could see herself sometimes in the great round pewter dishes that were ranged on the shelves above the long deal dinner-table, or in the hobs of the grate, which always shone like jasper.

Everything was looking at its brightest at this moment, for the sun shone right on the pewter dishes, and from their reflecting surfaces pleasant jets of light were thrown on mellow oak and bright brass—and on a still pleasanter object than these; for some of the rays fell on Dinah's finely moulded cheek, and lit up her pale red hair to auburn, as she bent over the heavy household linen which she was mending for her aunt. No scene could have been more peaceful, if Mrs. Poyser, who was ironing a few things that still remained from the Monday's wash,

had not been making a frequent clinking with her iron, and moving to and fro whenever she wanted it to cool; carrying the keen glance of her blue-gray eye from the kitchen to the dairy, where Hetty was making up the butter, and from the dairy to the back kitchen, where Nancy was taking the pies out of the oven. . . . The family likeness between her and her niece, Dinah Morris, with the contrast between her keenness and Dinah's seraphic gentleness of expression, might have served a painter as an excellent suggestion for a Martha and Mary. Their eyes were just of the same colour, but a striking test of the difference in their operation was seen in the demeanour of Trip, the black-and-tan terrier, whenever that much-suspected dog unwarily exposed himself to the freezing arctic ray of Mrs. Poyser's glance. Her tongue was not less keen than her eye, and, whenever a damsel came within earshot, seemed to take up an unfinished lecture, as a barrel-organ takes up a tune, precisely at the point where it had left off.

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The causeway outside the kitchen door was dry enough now for Mrs. Poyser to stand there quite pleasantly and see what was going on in the yard, the gray worsted stocking making a steady progress in her hands all the while. But she had not been standing there more than five minutes before she came in again and said to Dinah in rather a flurried, awestricken tone—

"If there isn't Captain Donnithorne and Mr. Irwine a-coming into the yard! I'll lay my life they're come to speak about your preaching on the Green, Dinah; it's you must answer 'em, for I'm dumb. I've said enough a'ready about your bringing such

disgrace upo' your uncle's family. I wouldn't ha' minded if you'd been Mr. Poyser's own niece—folks must put up wi' their own kin, as they put up wi' their own noses—it's their own flesh and blood. But to think of a niece o' mine being cause o' my husband's being turned out of his farm, and me brought him no fortin but my savings——"

"Nay, dear aunt Rachel," said Dinah, gently, "you've no cause for such fears. I've strong assurance that no evil will happen to you and my uncle and the children from anything I've done. I didn't preach without direction."

"Direction! I know very well what you mean by direction," said Mrs. Poyser, knitting in a rapid and agitated manner. "When there's a bigger maggot than usial in your head you call it 'direction'; and then nothing can stir you—you look like the statty o' the outside o' Treddles'on church, a-starin' and a-smilin' whether it's fair weather or foul. I hanna common patience with you."

[*Mrs. Poyser takes Arthur Donnithorne to see the dairy.*]

"I hope you will be ready for a great holiday on the thirtieth of July, Mrs. Poyser," said Captain Donnithorne, when he had sufficiently admired the dairy, and given several improvised opinions on Swede turnips and short-horns. "You know what is to happen then, and I shall expect you to be one of the guests who come earliest and leave latest. Will you promise me your hand for two dances, Miss Hetty? If I don't get your promise now, I know I shall hardly have a chance, for all the smart young farmers will take care to secure you."

Hetty smiled and blushed, but before she could answer, Mrs. Poyser interposed, scandalised at the mere suggestion that the young squire could be excluded by any meaner partners.

"Indeed, sir, you're very kind to take that notice of her. And I'm sure, whenever you're pleased to dance with her, she'll be proud and thankful, if she stood still all the rest o' th' evening."

"Oh no, no, that would be too cruel to all the other young fellows who can dance. But you will promise me two dances, won't you?" the Captain continued, determined to make Hetty look at him and speak to him.

Hetty dropped the prettiest little curtsy, and stole a half-shy, half-coquettish glance at him as she said—

"Yes, thank you, sir."

[*They are left for a few moments alone.*]

"And do you carry the butter to market when you've made it?" said the Captain to Hetty, meanwhile.

"Oh no, sir; not when it's so heavy; I'm not strong enough to carry it: Alick takes it on horseback."

"No, I'm sure your pretty arms were never meant for such heavy weights. But you go out a walk sometimes these pleasant evenings, don't you? Why don't you have a walk in the Chase, sometimes, now it's so green and pleasant? I hardly ever see you anywhere except at home and at church."

"Aunt doesn't like me to go a-walking, only when I'm going somewhere," said Hetty. "But I go through the Chase sometimes."

"And don't you ever go to see Mrs. Best, the housekeeper? I think I saw you once in the housekeeper's room."

"It isn't Mrs. Best, it's Mrs. Pomfret, the lady's-maid, as I go to see. She's teaching me tent-stitch and the lace-mending. I'm going to tea with her to-morrow afternoon."

[*Mr. Irwine and Captain Donnithorne take their leave.*]

"D' you hear what's happened, Hetty?" said her aunt.

"No; how should I hear anything?" was the answer, in a pettish tone.

"Not as you'd care much, I daresay, if you did hear; for you're too feather-headed to mind if everybody was dead, so as you could stay upstairs a-dressing yourself for two hours by the clock. But anybody besides yourself 'ud mind about such things happening to them as think a deal more of you than you deserve. But Adam Bede and all his kin might be drownded for what you'd care—you'd be perking at the glass the next minute."

"Adam Bede—drowned?" said Hetty, letting her arms fall, and looking rather bewildered, but suspecting that her aunt was as usual exaggerating with a didactic purpose.

"No, my dear, no," said Dinah, kindly, for Mrs. Poyser had passed on to the pantry without deigning more precise information. "Not Adam. Adam's father, the old man, is drowned. He was drowned last night in the Willow Brook. Mr. Irwine has just told me about it."

"Oh, how dreadful!" said Hetty, looking serious, but not deeply affected; and as Molly now entered with the dock-leaves, she took them silently and returned to the dairy without asking further questions.

* * * * *

At five o'clock Lisbeth came downstairs with a large key in her hand: it was the key of the chamber where her husband lay dead. Throughout the day, except in her occasional outbursts of wailing grief, she had been in incessant movement, performing the initial duties to her dead with the awe and exactitude that belong to religious rites. She had brought out her little store of bleached linen, which she had for long years kept in reserve for this supreme use. It seemed but yesterday—that time so many midsummers ago, when she had told Thias where this linen lay, that he might be sure and reach it out for her when *she* died, for she was the elder of the two. Then there had been the work of cleansing to the strictest purity every object in the sacred chamber, and of removing from it every trace of common daily occupation. The small window which had hitherto freely let in the frosty moonlight or the warm summer sunrise on the working man's slumber, must now be darkened with a fair white sheet, for this was the sleep which is as sacred under the bare rafters as in ceiled houses. Lisbeth had even mended a long-neglected and unnoticeable rent in the checkered bit of bed-curtain; for the moments were few and precious now in which she would be able to do the smallest office of respect or love for the still corpse, to which in all her thoughts she attributed some consciousness. Our dead are never dead to us until we have forgotten them: they can be injured by us, they can be wounded; they

know all our penitence, all our aching sense that their place is empty, all the kisses we bestow on the smallest relic of their presence. And the aged peasant-woman most of all believes that her dead are conscious. Decent burial was what Lisbeth had been thinking of for herself through years of thrift, with an indistinct expectation that she should know when she was being carried to the churchyard, followed by her husband and her sons ; and now she felt as if the greatest work of her life were to be done in seeing that Thias was buried decently before her—under the White Thorn, where once, in a dream, she had thought she lay in the coffin, yet all the while saw the sunshine above, and smelt the white blossoms that were so thick upon the thorn the Sunday she went to be churched after Adam was born.

Adam opened his eyes and saw his mother standing before him. It was not very unlike his dream, for his sleep had been little more than living through again, in a fevered, delirious way, all that had happened since daybreak, and his mother with her fretful grief was present to him through it all. The chief difference between the reality and the vision was, that in his dream Hetty was continually coming before him in bodily presence—strangely mingling herself as an actor in scenes with which she had nothing to do. She was even by the Willow Brook ; she made his mother angry by coming into the house ; and he met her with her smart clothes quite wet through as he walked in the rain to Treddleston, to tell the coroner. But wherever Hetty came, his mother was sure to follow soon ; and when he opened his eyes it was not at all startling to see her standing near him.

" Eh, my lad, my lad ! " Lisbeth burst out immediately, her wailing impulse returning, for grief in its freshness feels the need of associating its loss and its lament with every change of scene and incident, " thee 'st got nobody now but thy old mother to torment thee and be a burthen to thee : thy poor feyther 'ull ne'er anger thee no more ; an' thy mother may's well go arter him—the sooner the better—for I'm no good to nobody now. One old coat 'ull do to patch another, but it's good for noght else. Theed'st like t' ha' a wife to mend thy clothes an' get thy victual, better nor thy old mother. An' I shall be noght but cumber, a-sittin' i' th' chimney-corner. (Adam winced and moved uneasily ; he dreaded, of all things, to hear his mother speak of Hetty.) But if thy feyther had lived, he'd ne'er ha' wanted me to go to make room for another, for he could no more ha' done wi'out me nor one side o' the scithers can do wi'out the tother. Eh, we should ha' been both flung away together, an' then I shouldna ha' seen this day, an' one buryin' 'ud ha' done for us both."

[*Dinah comes to comfort Lisbeth.*]

" Ah ! I know who y' are now ; y' are a Methody, like Seth ; he's tould me on you," said Lisbeth, fretfully, her overpowering sense of pain returning, now her wonder was gone. " Ye'll make it out as trouble's a good thing, like *he* allays does. But where's the use o' talkin' to me a-that 'n ? Ye canna make the smart less wi' talkin'. Ye'll ne'er make me believe as it's better for me not to ha' my old man die in 's bed, if he must die, an' ha' the parson to pray by 'm, an' me to sit by 'm, an' tell him ne'er to mind

th' ill words I 'n gen him sometimes when I war angered, an' to gi' 'm a bit an' a sup, as long as a bit an' a sup he'd swallow. But, eh! to die i' the could water, an' us close to 'm, an' ne'er to know; an' me a-sleepin' as if I ne'er belonged to 'm no more nor if he'd been a journeyman tramp from nobody knows where."

Here Lisbeth began to cry and rock herself again; and Dinah said—

"Yes, dear friend, your affliction is great. It would be hardness of heart to say that your trouble was not heavy to bear. God didn't send me to you to make light of your sorrow, but to mourn with you, if you will let me. If you had a table spread for a feast, and was making merry with your friends, you would think it was kind to let me come and sit down and rejoice with you, because you would think I should like to share those good things; but I should like better to share in your trouble and your labour, and it would seem harder to me if you denied me that. You won't send me away? You're not angry with me for coming?"

"Nay, nay; angered! who said I war angered? It war good on you to come. An' Seth, why donna ye get her some tay? Ye war in a hurry to get some for me, as had no need, but ye donna think o' gettin' 't for them as wants it. Sit ye down; sit ye down. I thank ye kindly for comin', for little it's wage ye get by walkin' through the wet fields to see an old woman like me. . . . Nay, I'n got no daughter o' my own—ne'er had one—an' I warna sorry, for they're poor queechy things, gells is; I allays wanted to ha' lads, as could fend for their sens. An' the lads 'll be marryin' —I shall ha' daughters enoo, and too many. But now, do ye make the tay as ye like it, for I'n got no

taste i' my mouth this day—it's all one what I swaller —it's all got the taste o' sorrow wi't."

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By six o'clock [the next morning] they were all at breakfast with Lisbeth in a kitchen as clean as she could have made it herself. The window and door were open, and the morning air brought with it a mingled scent of southernwood, thyme, and sweet-briar from the patch of garden by the side of the cottage. Dinah did not sit down at first, but moved about serving the others with the warm porridge and the toasted oat-cake, which she had got ready in the usual way, for she had asked Seth to tell her just what his mother gave them for breakfast. Lisbeth had been unusually silent since she came downstairs, apparently requiring some time to adjust her ideas to a state of things in which she came down like a lady to find all the work done, and sat still to be waited on. Her new sensations seemed to exclude the remembrance of her grief. At last, after tasting the porridge, she broke silence—

"Ye might ha' made the parridge worse," she said to Dinah, "I can ate it wi'out it's turnin' my stomach. It might ha' been a trifle thicker an' no harm, an' I allays putten a sprig o' mint in mysen; but how's ye t' know that? The lads arena like to get folks as 'ull make their parridge as I'n made it for 'em; it's well if they get onybody as 'll make parridge at all. But ye might do, wi' a bit o' showin'; for you're a stirrin' body in a mornin', an' ye've a light heel, and ye've cleaned the house well enoof for a ma'shift."

"Makeshift, mother?" said Adam. "Why, I think the house looks beautiful. I don't know how it could look better."

" Thee dostna know. Nay : how's thee to know ? Th' men ne'er know whether the floor's cleaned or cat-licked. But thee'lt know when thee gets thy parridge burnt, as thee 't like to ha' it when I 'n gi'en o'er makin' it. Thee 't think thy mother war good for summat then."

" Dinah," said Seth, " do come and sit down now and have your breakfast. We're all served now."

" Ay, come an' sit ye down—do," said Lisbeth, " an' ate a mossel ; ye'd need, arter bein' upo' your legs this hour an' half a'ready. Come, then," she added, in a tone of complaining affection as Dinah sat down by her side, " I'll be loath for ye t' go, but ye canna stay much longer, I doubt. I could put up wi' ye i' th' house better nor wi' most folks."

" I'll stay till to-night, if you're willing," said Dinah. " I'd stay longer, only I'm going back to Snowfield on Saturday, and I must be with my aunt to-morrow."

* * * * *

" What art goin' to do ? " asked Lisbeth. " Set about thy feyther's coffin ? "

" No, mother," said Adam, " we're going to take the wood to the village, and have it made there."

" Nay, my lad, nay," Lisbeth burst out in an eager, wailing tone ; " thee wotna let nobody make thy feyther's coffin but thysen ? Who'd make it so well ? An' him as know'd what good work war, an 's got a son as is th' head o' the village, an' all Treddles'on too, for cleverness."

" Very well, mother, if that's thy wish, I'll make the coffin at home ; but I thought thee wouldstna like to hear the work going on."

" An' why shouldna I like 't ? It's the right thing to be done. An' what's liking got to do wi' 't ? It's

choice o' mislikings is all I 'n got i' this world. One mossel's as good as another when your mouth's out o' taste. Thee mun set about it now this mornin' fust thing. I winna ha' nobody to touch the coffin but thee."

Adam's eyes met Seth's, which looked from Dinah to him rather wistfully.

" No, mother," he said, " I'll not consent but Seth shall have a hand in it too, if it's to be done at home. I'll go to the village this forenoon, because Mr. Burge 'll want to see me, and Seth shall stay at home and begin the coffin. I can come back at noon, and then he can go."

" Nay, nay," persisted Lisbeth, beginning to cry, "I 'n set my heart on 't as thee shalt ma' thy feyther's coffin. Thee 't so stiff an' masterful, thee 't ne'er do as thy mother wants thee. Thee wast often angered wi' thy feyther when he war alive ; thee must be the better to 'm, now he's gone. He'd ha' thought nothin' on 't for Seth to ma's coffin."

" Say no more, Adam, say no more," said Seth, gently, though his voice told that he spoke with some effort ; " mother's in the right. I'll go to work, and do thee stay at home."

He passed into the workshop immediately, followed by Adam ; while Lisbeth, automatically obeying her old habits, began to put away the breakfast things, as if she did not mean Dinah to take her place any longer. Dinah said nothing, but presently used the opportunity of quietly joining the brothers in the workshop.

They had already got on their aprons and paper caps, and Adam was standing with his left hand on Seth's shoulder, while he pointed with the hammer in his right to some boards which they were looking at.

Their backs were turned towards the door by which Dinah entered, and she came in so gently that they were not aware of her presence till they heard her voice saying, " Seth Bede ! " Seth started, and they both turned round. Dinah looked as if she did not see Adam, and fixed her eyes on Seth's face, saying with calm kindness—

" I won't say farewell. I shall see you again when you come from work. So as I'm at the Farm before dark, it will be quite soon enough."

" Thank you, Dinah ; I should like to walk home with you once more. It'll perhaps be the last time."

There was a little tremor in Seth's voice. Dinah put out her hand and said, " You'll have sweet peace in your mind to-day, Seth, for your tenderness and long-suffering towards your aged mother."

She turned round and left the workshop as quickly and quietly as she had entered it.

[*Arthur Donnithorne makes an expedition to see a friend, to avoid the temptation of meeting Hetty in the wood.*]

Behind this explicit resolution there lay an implicit one. If he lunched with Gawaine and lingered chatting, he should not reach the Chase again till nearly five, when Hetty would be safe out of his sight in the housekeeper's room ; and when she set out to go home, it would be his lazy time after dinner, so he should keep out of her way altogether. There really would have been no harm in being kind to the little thing. . . .

After this, you will perhaps be surprised to hear, that although Gawaine was at home, the hand of the dial in the court-yard had scarcely cleared the last

stroke of three, when Arthur returned through the entrance-gates, got down from the panting Rattler, and went into the house to take a hasty luncheon. But I believe there have been men since his day who have ridden a long way to avoid a rencontre, and then galloped hastily back lest they should miss it. It is the favourite stratagem of our passions to sham a retreat, and to turn sharp round upon us at the moment we have made up our minds that the day is our own.

* * * * *

Ah ! there she comes : first, a bright patch of colour, like a tropic bird among the boughs, then a tripping figure, with a round hat on, and a small basket under her arm ; then a deep-blushing, almost frightened, but bright-smiling girl, making her curtsy with a fluttered yet happy glance, as Arthur came up to her. If Arthur had had time to think at all, he would have thought it strange that he should feel fluttered too, be conscious of blushing too—in fact, look and feel as foolish as if he had been taken by surprise instead of meeting just what he expected. Poor things ! It was a pity they were not in that golden age of childhood when they would have stood face to face, eyeing each other with timid liking, then given each other a little butterfly kiss, and toddled off to play together. Arthur would have gone home to his silk-curtained cot, and Hetty to her home-spun pillow, and both would have slept without dreams, and to-morrow would have been a life hardly conscious of a yesterday.

" Do you always come back this way in the evening, or are you afraid to come so lonely a road ? "

" Oh no, sir, it's never late ; I always set out by eight o'clock, and it's so light now in the evening.

My aunt would be angry with me if I didn't get home before nine."

"Perhaps Craig, the gardener, comes to take care of you?"

A deep blush overspread Hetty's face and neck. "I'm sure he doesn't; I'm sure he never did; I wouldn't let him; I don't like him," she said hastily, and the tears of vexation had come so fast, that before she had done speaking a bright drop rolled down her hot cheek. Then she felt ashamed to death that she was crying, and for one long instant her happiness was all gone. But in the next she felt an arm steal round her, and a gentle voice said—

"Why, Hetty, what makes you cry? I didn't mean to vex you. I wouldn't vex you for the world, you little blossom. Come, don't cry; look at me, else I shall think you won't forgive me."

Arthur had laid his hand on the soft arm that was nearest to him, and was stooping towards Hetty with a look of coaxing entreaty. Hetty lifted her long dewy lashes, and met the eyes that were bent towards her with a sweet, timid, beseeching look. What a space of time those three moments were, while their eyes met and his arms touched her! . . . .

But they started asunder with beating hearts: something had fallen on the ground with a rattling noise; it was Hetty's basket; all her little work-woman's matters were scattered on the path, some of them showing a capability of rolling to great lengths. There was much to be done in picking up, and not a word was spoken; but when Arthur hung the basket over her arm again, the poor child felt a strange difference in his look and manner. He just pressed her hand, and said with a look and tone that were almost chilling to her—

" I have been hindering you ; I must not keep you any longer now. You will be expected at the house. Good-bye."

[*He meets her again, however, on her return from the housekeeper's room.*]

She is at another gate now—that leading into Firtree Grove. She enters the wood, where it is already twilight, and at every step she takes, the fear at her heart becomes colder. If he should not come ! Oh how dreary it was—the thought of going out at the other end of the wood, into the unsheltered road without having seen him. She reaches the first turning towards the Hermitage, walking slowly—he is not there. She hates the leveret that runs across the path : she hates everything that is not what she longs for. She walks on, happy whenever she is coming to a bend in the road, for perhaps he is behind it. No. She is beginning to cry : her heart has swelled so, the tears stand in her eyes ; she gives one great sob, while the corners of her mouth quiver, and the tears roll down.

She doesn't know that there is another turning to the Hermitage, that she is close against it, and that Arthur Donnithorne is only a few yards from her, full of one thought, and a thought of which she only is the object. He is going to see Hetty again—that is the longing which has been growing through the last three hours to a feverish thirst. Not, of course, to speak in the caressing way into which he had unguardedly fallen before dinner, but to set things right with her by a kindness which would have the air of friendly civility, and prevent her from running away with wrong notions about their mutual relation.

If Hetty had known he was there, she would not have cried ; and it would have been better, for then Arthur would perhaps have behaved as wisely as he had intended. As it was, she started when he appeared at the end of the side-alley, and looked up at him with two great drops rolling down her cheeks. What else could he do but speak to her in a soft, soothing tone, as if she were a bright-eyed spaniel with a thorn in her foot ?

" Has something frightened you, Hetty ? Have you seen anything in the wood ? Don't be frightened —I'll take care of you now."

Hetty was blushing so, she didn't know whether she was happy or miserable. To be crying again— what did gentlemen think of girls who cried in that way ? She felt unable even to say " no," but could only look away from him, and wipe the tears from her cheek. Not before a great drop had fallen on her rose-coloured strings : she knew that quite well.

" Come, be cheerful again. Smile at me, and tell me what's the matter. Come, tell me."

Hetty turned her head towards him, whispered, " I thought you wouldn't come," and slowly got courage to lift her eyes to him. That look was too much : he must have had eyes of Egyptian granite not to look too lovingly in return.

" You little frightened bird ! little tearful rose ! silly pet ! You won't cry again, now I'm with you, will you ? "

Ah ! he doesn't know in the least what he is saying. This is not what he meant to say. His arm is stealing round the waist again, it is tightening its clasp ; he is bending his face nearer and nearer to the round cheek, his lips are meeting those pouting child-lips, and for a long moment time has vanished. He may

be a shepherd in Arcadia for aught he knows, he may be the first youth kissing the first maiden, he may be Eros himself, sipping the lips of Psyche—it is all one.

There was no speaking for minutes after. They walked along with beating hearts till they came within sight of the gate at the end of the wood. Then they looked at each other, not quite as they had looked before, for in their eyes there was the memory of a kiss.

[*Arthur is disappointed with himself, and full of remorse. He resolves to clear his conscience by a confession to Mr. Irwine, but fails to make the confession.*]

"But surely you don't think a man who struggles against a temptation into which he falls at last, as bad as the man who never struggles at all?"

"No, my boy, I pity him in proportion to his struggles, for they foreshadow the inward suffering which is the worst form of Nemesis. Consequences are unpitying. Our deeds carry their terrible consequences, quite apart from any fluctuations that went before—consequences that are hardly ever confined to ourselves. And it is best to fix our minds on that certainty, instead of considering what may be the elements of excuse for us. But I never knew you so inclined for moral discussion, Arthur? Is it some danger of your own that you are considering in this philosophical, general way?"

In asking this question, Mr. Irwine pushed his plate away, threw himself back in his chair, and looked straight at Arthur. He really suspected that Arthur

wanted to tell him something, and thought of smoothing the way for him by this direct question. But he was mistaken. Brought suddenly and involuntarily to the brink of confession, Arthur shrank back, and felt less disposed towards it than ever. The conversation had taken a more serious tone than he had intended—it would quite mislead Irwine—he would imagine there was a deep passion for Hetty, while there was no such thing. He was conscious of colouring, and was annoyed at his boyishness.

" Oh no, no danger," he said, as indifferently as he could. " I don't know that I am more liable to irresolution than other people ; only there are little incidents now and then that set one speculating on what might happen in the future."

[*At church on Sunday.*]

Mr. and Mrs. Poyser paused a minute at the church gate : they were waiting for Adam to come up, not being contented to go away without saying a kind word to the widow and her sons.

" Well, Mrs. Bede," said Mrs. Poyser, as they walked on together, " you must keep up your heart ; husbands and wives must be content when they've lived to rear their children and see one another's hair gray."

" Ay, ay," said Mr. Poyser ; " they wonna have long to wait for one another then, anyhow. And ye've got two o' the strapping'st sons i' the country ; and well you may, for I remember poor Thias as fine a broad-shouldered fellow as need to be ; and as for you, Mrs. Bede, why, you're straighter i' the back nor half the young women now."

" Eh," said Lisbeth, " it's poor luck for the platter

to wear well when it's broke i' two. The sooner I'm laid under the Thorn, the better. I'm no good to nobody now."

Adam never took notice of his mother's little unjust plaints; but Seth said, "Nay, mother, thee mustna say so. Thy sons 'ull never get another mother."

"That's true, lad, that's true," said Mr. Poyser; "and it's wrong on us to give way to grief, Mrs. Bede; for it's like the children cryin' when the fathers and mothers take things from 'em. There's One above knows better nor us."

"Ah," said Mrs. Poyser, "an' it's poor work allays settin' the dead above the livin'. We shall all on us be dead sometime, I reckon—it 'ud be better if folks 'ud make much on us beforehand, istid o' beginnin' when we're gone. It's but little good you'll do a-waterin' the last year's crop."

"Well, Adam," said Mr. Poyser, feeling that his wife's words were, as usual, rather incisive than soothing, and that it would be well to change the subject, "you'll come and see us again now, I hope. I hanna had a talk with you this long while, and the missis here wants you to see what can be done with her best spinning-wheel, for it's got broke, and it'll be a nice job to mend it—there'll want a bit o' turning. You'll come as soon as you can, now, will you?"

Mr. Poyser paused and looked round while he was speaking, as if to see where Hetty was; for the children were running on before. Hetty was not without a companion, and she had, besides, more pink and white about her than ever; for she held in her hand the wonderful pink-and-white hot-house plant with a very long name—a Scotch name, she supposed, since people said Mr. Craig the gardener was Scotch.

Adam took the opportunity of looking round too ; and I am sure you will not require of him that he should feel any vexation in observing a pouting expression on Hetty's face as she listened to the gardener's small-talk.

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Martin Poyser held Mr. Craig in honour, as a man who " knew his business," and who had great lights concerning soils and compost ; but he was less of a favourite with Mrs. Poyser, who had more than once said in confidence to her husband, " You're mighty fond o' Craig ; but for my part, I think he's welly like a cock as thinks the sun's rose o' purpose to hear him crow." For the rest, Mr. Craig was an estimable gardener, and was not without reasons for having a high opinion of himself. . . . Moreover, Mr. Craig had always been full of civilities to the family at the Hall Farm, and Mrs. Poyser was scrupulous in declaring that she had " nothing to say again' him, on'y it was a pity he couldna be hatched o'er again, an' hatched different."

So Adam and Seth, with their mother between them, wound their way down to the valley and up again to the old house, where a saddened memory had take the place of a long, long anxiety—where Adam would never have to ask again as he entered, " Where's father ? "

[*Adam visits the Hall Farm.*]

" What's thee got thy Sunday cloose on for ? " said Lisbeth, complainingly, as he came down stairs. " Thee artna goin' to th' school i' thy best coat ? "

" No, mother," said Adam, quietly. " I'm going

to the Hall Farm, but mayhap I may go to the school after, so thee mustna wonder if I'm a bit late Seth 'ull be at home in half an hour—he's only gone to the village; so thee wotna mind."

"Eh, an' what's thee got thy best cloose on for to go to th' Hall Farm? The Poyser folks see'd thee in 'em yesterday, I warrand. What dost mean by turnin' worki' day into Sunday a-that 'n? It's poor keepin' company wi' folks as donna like to see thee i' thy workin' jacket."

"Good-bye mother, I can't stay," said Adam, putting on his hat and going out.

But he had no sooner gone a few paces beyond the door than Lisbeth became uneasy at the thought that she had vexed him. Of course, the secret of her objection to the best clothes was her suspicion that they were put on for Hetty's sake; but deeper than all her peevishness lay the need that her son should love her. She hurried after him, and laid hold of his arm before he had got half-way down to the brook, and said, "Nay, my lad, thee wotna go away angered wi' thy mother, an' her got noght to do but to sit by hersen an' think on thee?"

"Nay, nay, mother," said Adam, gravely, and standing still while he put his arm on her shoulder, "I'm not angered. But I wish, for thy own sake, thee'dst be more contented to let me do what I've made up my mind to do. I'll never be no other than a good son to thee as long as we live. But a man has other feelings besides what he owes to 's father and mother; and thee ought na to want to rule over me body and soul. And thee must make up thy mind, as I'll not give way to thee where I've a right to do what I like. So let us have no more words about it."

[*Adam seeks Hetty in the garden.*]

He could see there was a large basket at the end of the row: Hetty would not be far off, and Adam already felt as if she were looking at him. Yet when he turned the corner she was standing with her back towards him, and stooping to gather the low-hanging fruit. Strange that she had not heard him coming! perhaps it was because she was making the leaves rustle. She started when she became conscious that someone was near — started so violently that she dropped the basin with the currants in it, and then, when she saw it was Adam, she turned from pale to deep red. That blush made his heart beat with a new happiness. Hetty had never blushed at seeing him before.

"I frightened you," he said, with a delicious sense that it didn't signify what he said, since Hetty seemed to feel as much as he did; "let *me* pick the currants up."

That was soon done, for they had only fallen in a tangled mass on the grass-plot, and Adam, as he rose and gave her the basin again, looked straight into her eyes with the subdued tenderness that belongs to the first moments of hopeful love.

Hetty did not turn away her eyes; her blush had subsided, and she met his glance with a quiet sadness, which contented Adam, because it was so unlike anything he had seen in her before.

"There's not many more currants to get," she said; "I shall soon ha' done now.'

"I'll help you," said Adam; and he fetched the large basket which was nearly full of currants, and set it close to them.

Not a word more was spoken as they gathered the currants. Adam's heart was too full to speak, and he thought Hetty knew all that was in it. She was not indifferent to his presence after all; she had blushed when she saw him, and then there was that touch of sadness about her which must surely mean love, since it was the opposite of her usual manner, which had often impressed him as indifference. And he could glance at her continually as she bent over the fruit, while the level evening sunbeams stole through the thick apple-tree boughs and rested on her round cheek and neck as if they too were in love with her.

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Hetty, we know, was not the first woman that had behaved more gently to the man who loved her in vain, because she had herself begun to love another. It was a very old story; but Adam knew nothing about it, so he drank in the sweet delusion.

"That'll do," said Hetty, after a little while. "Aunt wants me to leave some on the trees. I'll take 'em in now."

"It's very well I came to carry the basket," said Adam, "for it 'ud ha' been too heavy for your little arms."

"No; I could ha' carried it with both hands."

"Oh, I daresay," said Adam, smiling, "and been as long getting into the house as a little ant carrying a caterpillar. Have you ever seen those tiny fellows carrying things four times as big as themselves?"

"No," said Hetty, indifferently, not caring to know the difficulties of ant-life.

"Oh, I used to watch 'em often when I was a lad. But now, you see, I can carry the basket with one arm, as if it was an empty nutshell, and give you th' other

arm to lean on. Won't you ? Such big arms as mine were made for little arms like yours to lean on."

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Everybody was come back from the meadow ; and when Hetty and Adam entered the house-place, Mr. Poyser was seated in the three-cornered chair, and the grandfather in the large arm-chair opposite, looking on with pleasant expectation while the supper was being laid on the oak table. Mrs. Poyser had laid the cloth herself—a cloth made of homespun linen, with a shining checkered pattern on it, and of an agreeable whitey-brown hue, such as all sensible housewives liked to see—none of your bleached " shop-rag " that would wear into holes in no time, but good homespun that would last for two generations. The cold veal, the fresh lettuces, and the stuffed chine, might well look tempting to hungry men who had dined at half-past twelve o'clock. On the large deal-table against the wall there were bright pewter-plates and spoons and cans, ready for Alick and his companions ; for the master and servants ate their supper not far off each other ; which was all the pleasanter, because if a remark about to-morrow morning's work occurred to Mr. Poyser, Alick was at hand to hear it.

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"What a time that gell is drawing th' ale, to be sure," said Mrs. Poyser, when she was dispensing her slices of stuffed chine. " I think she sets the jug under and forgets to turn the tap, as there's nothing you can't believe o' them wenches : they'll set th' empty kettle o' the fire, and then come an hour after to see if the water boils."

"She's drawin' for the men too," said Mr. Poyser. "Thee shouldst ha' told her to bring our jug up first."

"Told her?" said Mrs. Poyser: "yis, I might spend all the wind i' my body, an' take the bellows too, if I was to tell them gells everything as their own sharpness wonna tell 'em. Mr. Bede, will you take some vinegar with your lettuce? Ay, you're i' the right not. It spoils the flavour o' the chine, to my thinking. It's poor eating where the flavour o' the meat lies i' the cruets. There's folks as make bad butter, and trusten to the salt t' hide it."

Mrs. Poyser's attention was here diverted by the appearance of Molly, carrying a large jug, two small mugs, and four drinking-cans, all full of ale or small beer—an interesting example of the prehensile power possessed by the human hand. Poor Molly's mouth was rather wider open than usual, as she walked along with her eyes fixed on the double cluster of vessels in her hands, quite innocent of the expression in her mistress's eye.

"Molly, I niver knew your equils—to think o' your poor mother as is a widow, an' I took you wi' as good as no character, an' the times an' times I've told you——"

Molly had not seen the lightning, and the thunder shook her nerves the more for the want of that preparation. With a vague alarmed sense that she must somehow comport herself differently, she hastened her step a little towards the far deal-table, where she might set down her cans—caught her foot in her apron, which had become untied, and fell with a crash and a splash into a pool of beer; whereupon a tittering explosion from Marty and Tommy, and a serious "Ello!" from Mr. Poyser, who saw his draught of ale unpleasantly deferred.

" There you go ! " resumed Mrs. Poyser, in a cutting tone, as she rose and went towards the cupboard, while Molly began dolefully to pick up the fragments of pottery. " It's what I told you 'ud come, over and over again ; and there's your month's wage gone, an' more, to pay for that jug as I've had i' the house this ten year, and nothing ever happened to 't before ; but the crockery you've broke sin' here in th' house you've been 'ud make a parson swear—God forgi' me for saying so ; an' if it had been boiling wort out o' the copper, it 'ud ha' been the same, and you'd ha' been scalded, and very like lamed for life, as there's no knowing but what you will be some day if you go on ; for anybody 'ud think you'd got the St. Vitus's Dance, to see the things you've throwed down. It's a pity but what the bits was stacked up for you to see, though it's neither seeing nor hearing as 'ull make much odds to you—anybody 'ud think you war case-hardened."

[*Adam goes to night-school to see his friend, Bartle Massey, the schoolmaster.*]

" Come to the music o' Friday night, if you can, my boy," said the old man, as he closed the gate after Adam, and leaned against it.

" Ay, ay," said Adam, striding along towards the streak of pale road. He was the only object moving on the wide common. The two gray donkeys, just visible in front of the gorse bushes, stood as still as limestone images—as still as the gray-thatched roof of the mud cottage a little farther on. Bartle kept his eye on the moving figure till it passed into the darkness ; while Vixen, in a state of divided

affection, had twice run back to the house to bestow a parenthetic lick on her puppies.

"Ay, ay," muttered the schoolmaster, as Adam disappeared; "there you go, stalking along—stalking along; but you wouldn't have been what you are if you hadn't had a bit of old lame Bartle inside you. The strongest calf must have something to suck at. There's plenty of these big, lumbering fellows 'ud never have known their A B C, if it hadn't been for Bartle Massey. Well, well, Vixen, you foolish wench, what is it, what is it? I must go in, must I? Ay, ay, I'm never to have a will o' my own any more. And those pups, what do you think I'm to do with 'em, when they're twice as big as you?—for I'm pretty sure the father was that hulking bull-terrier of Will Baker's—wasn't he now, eh, you sly huzzy?" (Here Vixen tucked her tail between her legs, and ran forward into the house. Subjects are sometimes broached which a well-bred female will ignore.)

"But where's the use of talking to a woman with babbies?" continued Bartle, "she's got no conscience—no conscience—it's all run to milk."

[*On the thirtieth of July, a fine day, Hetty is preparing to go to the birthday celebrations of Arthur Donnithorne. She tries on some earrings which, however, she must not wear in public.*]

"Little, little ears!" Arthur had said, pretending to pinch them one evening, as Hetty sat beside him on the grass without her hat. "I wish I had some pretty earrings!" she said in a moment, almost before she knew what she was saying—the wish lay so close to her lips, it *would* flutter past them at the slightest breath. And the next day—it was only last week—

Arthur had ridden over to Rosseter on purpose to buy them. That little wish, so naïvely uttered, seemed to him the prettiest bit of childishness—he had never heard anything like it before; and he had wrapped the box up in a great many covers, that he might see Hetty unwrapping it with growing curiosity, till at last her eyes flashed back their new delight into his.

[*At the health-drinking Mr. Poyser makes a speech.*]

Arthur had felt a twinge of conscience during Mr. Poyser's speech, but it was too feeble to nullify the pleasure he felt in being praised. Did he not deserve what was said of him, on the whole? If there was something in his conduct that Poyser wouldn't have liked if he had known it, why, no man's conduct will bear too close an inspection; and Poyser was not likely to know it; and, after all, what had he done? Gone a little too far perhaps in flirtation, but another man in his place would have acted much worse; and no harm would come—no harm *should* come, for the next time he was alone with Hetty, he would explain to her that she must not think seriously of him or of what had passed. It was necessary to Arthur, you perceive, to be satisfied with himself: uncomfortable thoughts must be got rid of by good intentions for the future, which can be formed so rapidly, that he had time to be uncomfortable and to become easy again before Mr. Poyser's slow speech was finished, and when it was time for him to speak he was quite light-hearted.

"I thank you all, my good friends and neighbours," Arthur said, "for the good opinion of me, and the kind feelings towards me which Mr. Poyser has been expressing on your behalf and on his own, and it will

always be my heartiest wish to deserve them. In the course of things we may expect that, if I live, I shall one day or other be your landlord; indeed it is on the ground of that expectation that my grandfather has wished me to celebrate this day and to come among you now; and I look forward to this position, not merely as one of power and pleasure for myself, but as a means of benefiting my neighbours. It hardly becomes so young a man as I am, to talk much about farming to you, who are most of you so much older, and are men of experience; still, I have interested myself a good deal in such matters, and learned as much about them as my opportunities have allowed; and when the course of events shall place the estate in my hands, it will be my first desire to afford my tenants all the encouragement a landlord can give them, in improving their land, and trying to bring about a better practice of husbandry. It will be my wish to be looked on by all my deserving tenants as their best friend, and nothing would make me so happy as to be able to respect every man on the estate, and to be respected by him in return. . . .

"There is one more thing I wish to tell you, that you may share my pleasure about it, as I hope and believe you will. I think there can be no man here who has not a respect, and some of you, I am sure, have a very high regard, for my friend, Adam Bede. It is well known to every one in this neighbourhood that there is no man whose word can be more depended on than his; that whatever he undertakes to do, he does well, and is as careful for the interests of those who employ him as for his own. I'm proud to say that I was very fond of Adam when I was a little boy, and I have never lost my old feeling for him—I think that shows that I know a good fellow when I find him.

It has long been my wish that he should have the management of the woods on the estate, which happen to be very valuable; not only because I think so highly of his character, but because he has the knowledge and the skill which fit him for the place. And I am happy to tell you that it is my grandfather's wish too, and it is now settled that Adam shall manage the woods—a change which I am sure will be very much for the advantage of the estate; and I hope you will by and by join me in drinking his health, and in wishing him all the prosperity in life that he deserves."

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"How do you do, Mrs. Poyser?" said Arthur. "Weren't you pleased to hear your husband make such a good speech to-day?"

"Oh, sir, the men are mostly so tongue-tied—you're forced partly to guess what they mean, as you do wi' the dumb creaturs."

"What! you think you could have made it better for him?" said Mr. Irwine, laughing.

"Well, sir, when I want to say anything, I can mostly find words to say it in, thank God. Not as I'm a-finding faut wi' my husband, for if he's a man o' few words, what he says he'll stand to."

"I'm sure I never saw a prettier party than this," Arthur said, looking round at the apple-cheeked children. "My aunt and the Miss Irwines will come up and see you presently. They were afraid of the noise of the toasts, but it would be a shame for them not to see you at table."

He walked on, speaking to the mothers and patting the children, while Mr. Irwine satisfied himself with standing still, and nodding at a distance, that no one's

attention might be disturbed from the young Squire, the hero of the day. Arthur did not venture to stop near Hetty, but merely bowed to her as he passed along the opposite side. The foolish child felt her heart swelling with discontent ; for what woman was ever satisfied with apparent neglect, even when she knows it to be the mask of love ? Hetty thought this was going to be the most miserable day she had had for a long while ; a moment of chill daylight and reality came across her dream ; Arthur, who had seemed so near to her only a few hours before, was separated from her, as the hero of a great procession is separated from a small outsider in the crowd.

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How Hetty's heart beat as Arthur approached her ! He had hardly looked at her to-day : now he *must* take her hand. Would he press it ? would he look at her ? She thought she would cry if he gave her no sign of feeling. Now he was there—he had taken her hand—yes, he was pressing it. Hetty turned pale as she looked up at him for an instant and met his eyes, before the dance carried him away. That pale look came upon Arthur like the beginning of a dull pain, which clung to him, though he must dance and smile and joke all the same. Hetty would look so, when he told her what he had to tell her : and he should never be able to bear it—he should be a fool, and give way again. Hetty's look did not really mean so much as he thought : it was only the sign of a struggle between the desire for him to notice her, and the dread lest she should betray the desire to others. But Hetty's face had a language that transcended her feelings.

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At last the time had come for the fourth dance—longed for by the strong, grave Adam, as if he had been a delicate-handed youth of eighteen; for we are all very much alike when we are in our first love; and Adam had hardly ever touched Hetty's hand for more than a transient greeting—had never danced with her but once before. His eyes had followed her eagerly to-night in spite of himself, and had taken in deeper draughts of love. He thought she behaved so prettily, so quietly; she did not seem to be flirting at all, she smiled less than usual; there was almost a sweet sadness about her. "God bless her!" he said, inwardly; "I'd make her life a happy 'un if a strong arm to work for her, and a heart to love her, could do it."

And then there stole over him delicious thoughts of coming home from work, and drawing Hetty to his side, and feeling her cheek softly pressed against his, till he forgot where he was, and the music and the tread of feet might have been the falling of rain and the roaring of the wind, for what he knew.

[*Just before they dance Hetty drops a locket, also Arthur's present, which she wears beneath her dress. Adam picks it up, and is puzzled and alarmed to see its value, but reassures himself.*]

And so Adam went to bed comforted, having woven for himself an ingenious web of probabilities—the surest screen a wise man can place between himself and the truth. His last waking thoughts melted into a dream that he was with Hetty again at the Hall Farm, and that he was asking her to forgive him for being so cold and silent.

And while he was dreaming this, Arthur was leading

Hetty to the dance, and saying to her in low hurried tones, " I shall be in the wood the day after to-morrow at seven ; come as early as you can." And Hetty's foolish joys and hopes, which had flown away for a little space, scared by a mere nothing, now all came fluttering back, unconscious of the real peril. She was happy for the first time this long day, and wished that dance would last for hours. Arthur wished it too ; it was the last weakness he meant to indulge in ; and a man never lies with more delicious languor under the influence of a passion, than when he has persuaded himself that he shall subdue it to-morrow.

[*Adam walks through the woods on the way from his work.*]

What grand beeches ! Adam delighted in a fine tree of all things : as the fisherman's sight is keenest on the sea, so Adam's perceptions were more at home with trees than with other objects. He kept them in his memory, as a painter does, with all the flecks and knots in their bark, all the curves and angles of their boughs ; and had often calculated the height and contents of a trunk to a nicety, as he stood looking at it. No wonder that, notwithstanding his desire to get on, he could not help pausing to look at a curious large beech which he had seen standing before him at a turning in the road, and convince himself that it was not two trees wedded together, but only one. For the rest of his life he remembered that moment when he was calmly examining the beech, as a man remembers his last glimpse of the home where his youth was passed, before the road turned, and he saw it no more. The beech stood at the last turning before the Grove ended in an archway

of boughs that let in the eastern light; and as Adam stepped away from the tree to continue his walk, his eyes fell on two figures about twenty yards before him.

He remained as motionless as a statue, and turned almost as pale. The two figures were standing opposite to each other, with clasped hands, about to part; and while they were bending to kiss, Gyp, who had been running among the brushwood, came out, caught sight of them, and gave a sharp bark. They separated with a start—one hurried through the gate out of the Grove, and the other, turning round, walked slowly, with a sort of saunter, towards Adam, who still stood transfixed and pale, clutching tighter the stick with which he held the basket of tools over his shoulder, and looking at the approaching figure with eyes in which amazement was fast turning to fierceness.

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Adam was still motionless, looking at him as he came up. He understood it all now—the locket, and everything else that had been doubtful to him: a terrible scorching light showed him the hidden letters that changed the meaning of the past. If he had moved a muscle, he must inevitably have sprung upon Arthur like a tiger; and in the conflicting emotions that filled those long moments, he had told himself that he would not give loose to passion, he would only speak the right thing. He stood as if petrified by an unseen force, but the force was his own strong will.

"Well, Adam," said Arthur, "you've been looking at the fine old beeches, eh? They're not to be come near by the hatchet, though; this is a sacred grove.

I overtook pretty little Hetty Sorrel as I was coming to my den—the Hermitage, there. She ought not to come home this way so late. So I took care of her to the gate, and asked for a kiss for my pains. But I must get back now, for this road is confoundedly damp. Good-night, Adam: I shall see you to-morrow—to say good-bye, you know." . . .

"Stop a bit, sir," said Adam, in a hard, peremptory voice, without turning round. "I've got a word to say to you."

Arthur paused in surprise. Susceptible persons are more affected by a change of tone than by unexpected words, and Arthur had the susceptibility of a nature at once affectionate and vain. He was still more surprised when he saw that Adam had not moved, but stood with his back to him, as if summoning him to return. . . .

"What do you mean, Adam?"

"I mean, sir," answered Adam, in the same harsh voice, still without turning round, "I mean, sir, that you don't deceive me by your light words. This is not the first time you've met Hetty Sorrel in this grove, and this is not the first time you've kissed her."

Arthur felt a startled uncertainty how far Adam was speaking from knowledge and how far from mere inference. And this uncertainty, which prevented him from contriving a prudent answer, heightened his irritation. He said in a high, sharp tone—

"Well, sir, what then?"

"Why, then, instead of acting like the upright, honourable man we've all believed you to be, you've been acting the part of a selfish, light-minded scoundrel. You know, as well as I do, what it's to lead to, when a gentleman like you kisses and makes love to a woman like Hetty, and gives her presents as she's

frightened for other folks to see. And I say it again, you're acting the part of a selfish, light-minded scoundrel, though it cuts me to th' heart to say so, and I'd rather ha' lost my right hand."

"Let me tell you, Adam," said Arthur, bridling his growing anger, and trying to recur to his careless tone, "you're not only devilishly impertinent, but you're talking nonsense. Every pretty girl is not such a fool as you, to suppose that when a gentleman admires her beauty, and pays her a little attention, he must mean something particular. Every man likes to flirt with a pretty girl, and every pretty girl likes to be flirted with. The wider the distance between them the less harm there is, for then she's not likely to deceive herself."

"I don't know what you mean by flirting," said Adam, "but if you mean behaving to a woman as if you loved her, and yet not loving her all the while, I say that's not th' action of an honest man, and what isn't honest does come t' harm. . . ."

"Well, Adam," he said, in a tone of friendly concession, "you're perhaps right. Perhaps I've gone a little too far in taking notice of the pretty little thing, and stealing a kiss now and then. You're such a grave, steady fellow, you don't understand the temptation to such trifling. I'm sure I wouldn't bring any trouble or annoyance on her and the good Poysers on any account if I could help it. But I think you look a little too seriously at it. You know I'm going away immediately, so I shan't make any more mistakes of the kind. But let us say good-night"—Arthur here turned round to walk on—"and talk no more about the matter. The whole thing will soon be forgotten."

"No, by God!" Adam burst out, with rage that

could be controlled no longer, throwing down the basket of tools, and striding forward till he was right in front of Arthur. All his jealousy and sense of personal injury, which he had been hitherto trying to keep under, had leaped up and mastered him. . . .

"No, it'll not be soon forgot, as you've come in between her and me, when she might ha' loved me—it'll not soon be forgot, as you've robbed me o' my happiness, while I thought you was my best friend, and a noble-minded man, as I was proud to work for. And you've been kissing her, and meaning nothing, have you? And I never kissed her i' my life, but I'd ha' worked hard for years for the right to kiss her. And you make light of it. You think little o' doing what may damage other folks, so as you get your bit o' trifling, as means nothing. I throw back your favours, for you're not the man I took you for. I'll never count you my friend any more. I'd rather you'd act as my enemy, and fight me where I stand—it's all th' amends you can make me."

Poor Adam, possessed by rage that could find no other vent, began to throw off his coat and his cap, too blind with passion to notice the change that had taken place in Arthur while he was speaking. Arthur's lips were now as pale as Adam's; his heart was beating violently. The discovery that Adam loved Hetty, was a shock which made him for the moment see himself in the light of Adam's indignation, and regard Adam's suffering as not merely a consequence but an element of his error. . . . He was only twenty-one —and three months ago—nay, much later—he had thought proudly that no man should ever be able to reproach him justly. His first impulse, if there had been time for it, would perhaps have been to utter words of propitiation; but Adam had no sooner

thrown off his coat and cap, than he became aware that Arthur was standing pale and motionless, with his hands still thrust in his waistcoat pockets.

"What!" he said, "won't you fight me like a man? You know I won't strike you while you stand so."

"Go away, Adam," said Arthur, "I don't want to fight you."

"No," said Adam, bitterly; "you don't want to fight me—you think I'm a common man, as you can injure without answering for it."

"I never meant to injure you," said Arthur, with returning anger. "I didn't know you loved her."

"But you've made her love *you*," said Adam. "You're a double-faced man—I'll never believe a word you say again."

"Go away, I tell you," said Arthur, angrily, "or we shall both repent."

"No," said Adam, with a convulsed voice, "I swear I won't go away without fighting you. Do you want provoking any more? I tell you you're a coward and a scoundrel, and I despise you."

The colour had all rushed back to Arthur's face: in a moment his white right hand was clenched, and dealt a blow like lightning, which sent Adam staggering backward. His blood was as thoroughly up as Adam's now, and the two men, forgetting the emotions that had gone before, fought with the instinctive fierceness of panthers in the deepening twilight darkened by the trees. The delicate-handed gentleman was a match for the workman in everything but strength, and Arthur's skill in parrying enabled him to protract the struggle for some long moments. But between unarmed men the battle is to the strong, where the strong is no blunderer, and Arthur must sink under a well-planted blow of Adam's, as a steel

rod is broken by an iron bar. The blow soon came, and Arthur fell, his head lying concealed in a tuft of fern, so that Adam could only discern his darkly-clad body.

He stood still in the dim light waiting for Arthur to rise. The blow had been given now, towards which he had been straining all the force of nerve and muscle—and what was the good of it? What had he done by fighting? Only satisfied his own passion, only wreaked his own vengeance. He had not rescued Hetty, not changed the past—there it was just as it had been; and he sickened at the vanity of his own rage.

But why did not Arthur rise? He was perfectly motionless, and the time seemed long to Adam. . . . Good God! had the blow been too much for him? Adam shuddered at the thought of his own strength, as with the oncoming of this dread he knelt down by Arthur's side and lifted his head from among the fern. There was no sign of life: the eyes and teeth were set. The horror that rushed over Adam completely mastered him, and forced upon him its own belief. He could feel nothing but that death was in Arthur's face, and that he was helpless before it. He made not a single movement, but knelt like an image of despair gazing at an image of death.

[*Arthur revives, and Adam helps him to the Hermitage.*]

"You begin to feel more yourself again, sir," he said, as the candle went out, and they were half-hidden from each other in the faint moonlight.

"Yes: I don't feel good for much—very lazy, and

not inclined to move; but I'll go home when I've taken this dose."

There was a slight pause before Adam said—

"My temper got the better of me, and I said things as wasn't true. I'd no right to speak as if you'd known you was doing me an injury: you'd no grounds for knowing it; I've always kept what I felt for her as secret as I could."

He paused again before he went on.

"And perhaps I judged you too harsh—I'm apt to be harsh; and you may have acted out o' thoughtlessness more than I should ha' believed was possible for a man with a heart and a conscience. We're not all put together alike, and we may misjudge one another. God knows, it's all the joy I could have now, to think the best of you."

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"Good God, Adam, let me alone!" Arthur burst out impetuously; "I feel it enough without your worrying me."

He was aware of his indiscretion as soon as the words had escaped him.

"Well, then, if you feel it," Adam rejoined, eagerly; "if you feel as you may ha' put false notions into her mind, and made her believe as you loved her, when all the while you meant nothing, I've this demand to make of you—I'm not speaking for myself, but for her. I ask you t' undeceive her before you go away. . . . I ask you to write a letter—you may trust to my seeing as she gets it: tell her the truth, and take blame to yourself for behaving as you'd no right to do to a young woman as isn't your equal. I speak plain, sir. But I can't speak any other way. There's nobody can take care o' Hetty in this thing but me."

"I can do what I think needful in the matter," said Arthur, more and more irritated by mingled distress and perplexity, "without giving promises to you. I shall take what measures I think proper." . . .

"You won't see her again!" Adam exclaimed, with a flash of recurring anger and suspicion, moving towards the door and placing his back against it. "Either tell me she can never be my wife—tell me you've been lying—or else promise me what I've said."

Adam, uttering this alternative, stood like a terrible fate before Arthur, who had moved forward a step or two, and now stopped, faint, shaken, sick in mind and body. It seemed long to both of them—that inward struggle of Arthur's—before he said, feebly, "I promise; let me go."

[*Having got the letter from Arthur, Adam delivers it to Hetty.*]

"After what I saw on Thursday night, Hetty," he began, "you won't think me making too free i' what I'm going to say. If you was being courted by any man as 'ud make y' his wife, and I'd known you was fond of him, and meant to have him, I should have no right to speak a word to you about it; but when I see you're being made love to by a gentleman as can never marry you, and doesna think o' marrying you, I feel bound t' interfere for you. I can't speak about it to them as are i' the place o' your parents, for that might bring worse trouble than's needful."

Adam's words relieved one of Hetty's fears, but they also carried a meaning which sickened her with a strengthened foreboding. She was pale and trembling, and yet she would have angrily contradicted

Adam, if she had dared to betray her feelings. But she was silent.

" You're so young, you know, Hetty," he went on, almost tenderly, " and y' haven't seen much o' what goes on in the world. It's right for me to do what I can to save you from getting into trouble for want o' your knowing where you're being led to. If anybody besides me knew what I know about your meeting a gentleman, and having fine presents from him, they'd speak light on you, and you'd lose your character. And besides that, you'll have to suffer in your feelings, wi' giving your love to a man as can never marry you, so as he might take care of you all your life."

Adam paused, and looked at Hetty, who was plucking the leaves from the filbert trees, and tearing them up in her hand. Her little plans and preconcerted speeches had all forsaken her, like an ill-learnt lesson, under the terrible agitation produced by Adam's words. There was a cruel force in their calm certainty which threatened to grapple and crush her flimsy hopes and fancies. She wanted to resist them —she wanted to throw them off with angry contradiction ; but the determination to conceal what she still felt governed her. It was nothing more than a blind prompting now, for she was unable to calculate the effect of her words.

" You've no right to say as I love him," she said, faintly, but impetuously, plucking another rough leaf and tearing it up. She was very beautiful in her paleness and agitation, with her dark childish eyes dilated, and her breath shorter than usual. Adam's heart yearned over her as he looked at her. Ah, if he could but comfort her, and soothe her, and save her from this pain ; if he had but some sort of strength that would enable him to rescue her poor troubled

mind, as he would have rescued her body in the face of all danger!

"I doubt it must be so, Hetty," he said tenderly, "for I canna believe you'd let any man kiss you by yourselves, and give you a gold box with his hair, and go a-walkin' i' the Grove to meet him, if you didna love him. I'm not blaming you, for I know it 'ud begin by little and little, till at last you'd not be able to throw it off. It's him I blame for stealing your love i' that way, when he knew he could never make you the right amends. He's been trifling with you, and making a plaything of you, and caring nothing about you as a man ought to care."

"Yes, he does care for me; I know better nor you," Hetty burst out. Everything was forgotten but the pain and anger she felt at Adam's words.

"Nay, Hetty," said Adam, "if he'd cared for you rightly he'd never ha' behaved so. He told me himself he meant nothing by his kissing and presents, and he wanted to make me believe as you thought light of 'em too. But I know better nor that. I can't help thinking as you've been trusting t's loving you well enough to marry you, for all he's a gentleman. And that's why I must speak to you about it, Hetty, for fear you should be deceiving yourself. It's never entered his head, the thought o' marrying you."

"How do you know? How durst you say so?" said Hetty, pausing in her walk and trembling. The terrible decision of Adam's tone shook her with fear. She had no presence of mind left for the reflection that Arthur would have his reasons for not telling the truth to Adam. Her words and look were enough to determine Adam: he must give her the letter.

"You perhaps can't believe me, Hetty; because you think too well of him—because you think he loves

you better than he does. But I've got a letter i' my pocket, as he wrote himself for me to give you. I've not read the letter, but he says he's told you the truth in it. But before I give you the letter, consider, Hetty, and don't let it take too much hold on you. It wouldna ha' been good for you if he'd wanted to do such a mad thing as marry you : it 'ud ha' led to no happiness i' the end."

Hetty said nothing : she felt a revival of hope at the mention of a letter which Adam had not read. There would be something quite different in it from what he thought.

[*Hetty reads her letter.*]

" DEAREST HETTY,—I have spoken truly when I have said that I loved you, and I shall never forget our love. I shall be your true friend as long as life lasts, and I hope to prove this to you in many ways. If I say anything to pain you in this letter, do not believe it is for want of love and tenderness towards you, for there is nothing I would not do for you, if I knew it to be really for your happiness. . . .

" Dear, dear Hetty, sweet as our love has been to me, sweet as it would be to me for you to love me always, I feel that it would have been better for us both if we had never had that happiness, and that it is my duty to ask you to love me and care for me as little as you can. The fault has all been mine, for though I have been unable to resist the longing to be near you, I have felt all the while that your affection for me might cause you grief. I ought to have resisted my feelings. I should have done so, if I had been a better fellow than I am ; but now, since the past cannot be altered, I am bound to save

you from any evil that I have power to prevent. And I feel it would be a great evil for you if your affections continued so fixed on me that you could think of no other man who might be able to make you happier by his love than I ever can, and if you continued to look towards something in the future which cannot possibly happen. For, dear Hetty, if I were to do what you one day spoke of, and make you my wife, I should do what you yourself would come to feel was for your misery instead of your welfare. I know you can never be happy except by marrying a man in your own station ; and if I were to marry you now, I should only be adding to any wrong I have done, besides offending against my duty in the other relations of life. You know nothing, dear Hetty, of the world in which I must always live, and you would soon begin to dislike me, because there would be so little in which we should be alike.

" And since I cannot marry you, we must part—we must try not to feel like lovers any more. I am miserable while I say this, but nothing else can be. Be angry with me, my sweet one—I deserve it ; but do not believe that I shall not always care for you—always be grateful to you—always remember my Hetty ; and if any trouble should come that we do not now foresee, trust in me to do everything that lies in my power.

" I have told you where you are to direct a letter to, if you want to write, but I put it down below lest you should have forgotten. Do not write unless there is something I can really do for you ; for, dear Hetty, we must try to think of each other as little as we can. Forgive me, and try to forget everything about me, except that I shall be, as long as I live, your affectionate friend, ARTHUR DONNITHORNE."

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There was a feeble dawn in the room when Hetty awoke, a little after four o'clock, with a sense of dull misery, the cause of which broke upon her gradually, as she began to discern the objects round her in the dim light. And then came the frightening thought that she had to conceal her misery, as well as to bear it, in this dreary daylight that was coming. She could lie no longer; she got up and went towards the table: there lay the letter; she opened her treasure-drawer: there lay the earrings and the locket—the signs of all her short happiness—the signs of the life-long dreariness that was to follow it. Looking at the little trinkets which she had once eyed and fingered so fondly as the earnest of her future paradise of finery, she lived back in the moments when they had been given to her with such tender caresses, such strangely pretty words, such glowing looks, which filled her with a bewildering delicious surprise—they were so much sweeter than she had thought anything could be. And the Arthur who had spoken to her and looked at her in this way, who was present with her now—whose arm she felt round her, his cheek against hers, his very breath upon her—was the cruel, cruel Arthur who had written that letter—that letter which she snatched and crushed and then opened again, that she might read it once more.

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Her eyes wandered sadly over the dull old chamber, and then looked out vacantly towards the growing dawn. . . .

She was only thinking she could never stay here and go on with the old life—she could better bear something quite new than sinking back into the old

everyday round. She would like to run away that very morning, and never see any of the old faces again. But Hetty's was not a nature to face difficulties —to dare to loose her hold on the familiar, and rush blindly on some unknown condition. Hers was a luxurious and vain nature, not a passionate one; and if she were ever to take any violent measure, she must be urged to it by the desperation of terror. There was not much room for her thoughts to travel in the narrow circle of her imagination, and she soon fixed on the one thing she would do to get away from her old life; she would ask her uncle to let her go to be a lady's-maid. Miss Lydia's maid would help her to get a situation, if she knew Hetty had her uncle's leave.

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"Hegh, hegh!" said Mr. Poyser, meaning to check her playfully, "don't let's have any crying. Crying's for them as ha' got no home, not for them as want to get rid o' one. What dost think?" he continued to his wife, who now came back into the house-place, knitting with fierce rapidity, as if that movement were a necessary function, like the twittering of a crab's antennæ.

"Think?—why, I think we shall have the fowl stole before we are much older, wi' that gell forgetting to lock the pens up o' nights. What's the matter now, Hetty? What are you crying at?"

"Why, she's been wanting to go for a lady's-maid," said Mr. Poyser. "I tell her we can do better for her nor that."

"I thought she'd got some maggot in her head, she's gone about wi' her mouth buttoned up so all day. It's all wi' going so among them servants at the Chase, as we were fools for letting her. She

thinks it 'ud be a finer life than being wi' them as are akin to her, and ha' brought her up sin' she war no bigger nor Marty. She thinks there's nothing belongs to being a lady's-maid, but wearing finer clothes nor she was born to, I'll be bound. It's what rag she can get to stick on her as she's thinking on from morning till night; as I often ask her if she wouldn't like to be the mawkin i' the field, for then she'd be made o' rags inside an' out. I'll ne'er gi' my consent to her going for a lady's-maid, while she's got good friends to take care on her till she's married to somebody better nor one o' them valets, as is neither a common man nor a gentleman, an' must live on the fat o' the land, an's like enough to stick his hands under his coat tails and expect his wife to work for him."

"Ay, ay," said Mr. Poyser, "we must have a better husband for her nor that, and there's better at hand. Come, my wench, give over crying, and get to bed. I'll do better for you nor letting you go for a lady's-maid. Let's hear no more on't."

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Her uncle's answers, however, had had another effect on Hetty besides that of disappointing her and making her cry. She knew quite well whom he had in mind in his allusions to marriage, and to a sober, solid husband; and when she was in her bedroom again, the possibility of her marrying Adam presented itself to her in a new light. In a mind where no strong sympathies are at work, where there is no supreme sense of right to which the agitated nature can cling and steady itself to quiet endurance, one of the first results of sorrow is a desperate vague clutching after any deed that will change the actual

condition. Poor Hetty's vision of consequences, at no time more than a narrow fantastic calculation of her own probable pleasures and pains, was now quite shut out by reckless irritation under present suffering, and she was ready for one of those convulsive, motiveless actions by which wretched men and women leap from a temporary sorrow into a life-long misery.

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Mrs. Poyser thought she noticed a surprising improvement in Hetty. To be sure, the girl got " closer tempered, and sometimes she seemed as if there'd be no drawing a word from her with cart-ropes " ; but she thought much less about her dress, and went after the work quite eagerly, without any telling. And it was wonderful how she never wanted to go out now—indeed, could hardly be persuaded to go ; and she bore her aunt's putting a stop to her weekly lesson in fine-work at the Chase, without the least grumbling or pouting. It must be, after all, that she had set her heart on Adam at last, and her sudden freak of wanting to be a lady's-maid must have been caused by some little pique or misunderstanding between them, which had passed by. For whenever Adam came to the Hall Farm, Hetty seemed to be in better spirits, and to talk more than at other times, though she was almost sullen when Mr. Craig or any other admirer happened to pay a visit there.

Adam himself watched her at first with trembling anxiety, which gave way to surprise and delicious hope. Five days after delivering Arthur's letter, he had ventured to go to the Hall Farm again—not without dread lest the sight of him might be painful to her. . . . . He almost started when he saw her smiling as if she were pleased to see him—looking

the same as ever at a first glance, only that she had her cap on, which he had never seen her in before when he came of an evening. Still, when he looked at her again and again as she moved about or sat at her work, there was a change: the cheeks were as pink as ever, and she smiled as much as she had ever done of late, but there was something different in her eyes, in the expression of her face, in all her movements, Adam thought—something harder, older, less child-like. "Poor thing!" he said to himself, "that's allays likely. It's because she's had her first heartache. But she's got a spirit to bear up under it. Thank God for that."

[*Adam feels he may ask Hetty to marry him, for besides being manager of the woods, he is taken into partnership by Mr. Burge. Hetty agrees to be his wife.*]

"I hope you've no objections against me for her husband," said Adam; "I'm a poor man as yet, but she shall want nothing as I can work for."

"Objections?" said Mr. Poyser, while the grandfather leaned forward and brought out his long "Nay, nay." "What objections can we ha' to you, lad? Never mind your being poorish as yet; there's money in your head-piece as there's money i' the sown field, but it must ha' time. You 'n got enough to begin on, and we can do a deal tow'rt the bit o' furniture you'll want. Thee 'st got feathers and linen to spare—plenty, eh?"

This question was of course addressed to Mrs. Poyser, who was wrapped up in a warm shawl, and was too hoarse to speak with her usual facility. At first she only nodded emphatically, but she was

presently unable to resist the temptation to be more explicit.

" It 'ud be a poor tale if I hadna feathers and linen," she said, hoarsely, " when I never sell a fowl but what's plucked, and the wheel's a-going every day o' the week."

" Come, my wench," said Mr. Poyser, when Hetty came down, " come and kiss us, and let us wish you luck."

Hetty went very quietly and kissed the big good-natured man.

" There ! " he said, patting her on the back, " go and kiss your aunt and your grandfather. I'm as wishful t' have you settled well as if you was my own daughter ; and so's your aunt, I'll be bound, for she's done by you this seven 'ear, Hetty, as if you'd been her own. Come, come, now," he went on, becoming jocose, as soon as Hetty had kissed her aunt and the old man, " Adam wants a kiss too, I'll warrant, and he's a right to one now."

Hetty turned away, smiling, towards her empty chair.

" Come, Adam, then, take one," persisted Mr. Poyser, " else y' arena half a man."

Adam got up, blushing like a small maiden—great strong fellow as he was—and, putting his arm round Hetty, stooped down and gently kissed her lips.

[*Adam and Hetty are to be married in March.*]

Hetty, in her red cloak and warm bonnet, with her basket in her hand, is turning towards a gate by the side of the Treddleston road, but not that she may have a more lingering enjoyment of the sunshine, and think with hope of the long unfolding year. She

hardly knows that the sun is shining ; and for weeks now, when she has hoped at all, it has been for something at which she herself trembles and shudders. She only wants to be out of the high-road, that she may walk slowly, and not care how her face looks, as she dwells on wretched thoughts ; and through this gate she can get into a field-path behind the wide thick hedgerows. Her great dark eyes wander blankly over the fields like the eyes of one who is desolate, homeless, unloved, not the promised bride of a brave, tender man. But there are no tears in them : her tears were all wept away in the weary night before she went to sleep. . . . Soon she is in the Scantlands, where the grassy land slopes gradually downwards, and she leaves the level ground to follow the slope. Farther on there is a clump of trees on the low ground, and she is making her way towards it. No, it is not a clump of trees, but a dark shrouded pool, so full with the wintry rains that the under boughs of the elder-bushes lie low beneath the water. She sits down on the grassy bank, against the stooping stem of the great oak that hangs over the dark pool. She has thought of this pool often in the nights of the month that has just gone by, and now at last she has come to see it. She clasps her hands round her knees and leans forward, and looks earnestly at it, as if trying to guess what sort of bed it would make for her young round limbs.

No, she has not courage to jump into that cold watery bed, and if she had, they might find her—they might find out why she had drowned herself. There is but one thing left to her : she must go away, go where they can't find her.

After the first on-coming of her great dread, some weeks after her betrothal to Adam, she had waited

and waited, in the blind vague hope that something would happen to set her free from her terror; but she could wait no longer. All the force of her nature had been concentrated on the one effort of concealment, and she had shrunk with irresistible dread from every course that could tend towards a betrayal of her miserable secret. Whenever the thought of writing to Arthur had occurred to her, she had rejected it: he could do nothing for her that would shelter her from discovery and scorn among the relatives and neighbours who once more made all her world, now her airy dream had vanished. Her imagination no longer saw happiness with Arthur, for he could do nothing that would satisfy or soothe her pride. No, something else would happen—something *must* happen—to set her free from this dread. In young, childish, ignorant souls there is constantly this blind trust in some unshapen chance: it is as hard to a boy or girl to believe that a great wretchedness will actually befall them, as to believe that they will die.

But now necessity was pressing hard upon her—now the time of her marriage was close at hand—she could no longer rest in this blind trust. She must run away; she must hide herself where no familiar eyes could detect her; and then the terror of wandering out into the world, of which she knew nothing, made the possibility of going to Arthur a thought which brought some comfort with it. She felt so helpless now, so unable to fashion the future for herself, that the prospect of throwing herself on him had a relief in it which was stronger than her pride. As she sat by the pool, and shuddered at the dark cold water, the hope that he would receive her tenderly—that he would care for her and think for her—was like a sense

of lulling warmth, that made her for the moment indifferent to everything else; and she began now to think of nothing but the scheme by which she should get away.

[*Hetty sets out, ostensibly to spend a week with Dinah, but really to go to Windsor, where Arthur's militia regiment has been quartered.*]

She who had never got up in the morning without the certainty of seeing familiar faces, people on whom she had an acknowledged claim; whose farthest journey had been to Rosseter on the pillion with her uncle; whose thoughts had always been taking holiday in dreams of pleasure, because all the business of her life was managed for her—this kitten-like Hetty, who, till a few months ago had never felt any other grief than that of envying Mary Burge a new ribbon, or being girded at by her aunt for neglecting Totty, must now make her toilsome way in loneliness, her peaceful home left behind for ever, and nothing but a tremulous hope of distant refuge before her. Now for the first time, as she lay down to-night in the strange hard bed, she felt that her home had been a happy one, that her uncle had been very good to her, that her quiet lot at Hayslope among the things and people she knew, with her little pride in her one best gown and bonnet, and nothing to hide from any one, was what she would like to wake up to as a reality, and find that all the feverish life she had known besides was a short nightmare.

[*When she finally reaches Windsor, she learns that the Loamshire Militia is in Ireland.*]

Where should she go? The horrible thought of want and beggary drove her once to think she would go back to her uncle and aunt, and ask them to forgive her and have pity on her. But she shrank from that idea again, as she might have shrunk from scorching metal: she could never endure that shame before her uncle and aunt, before Mary Burge, and the servants at the Chase, and the people at Broxton, and everybody who knew her. They should never know what had happened to her. What *could* she do? She would go away from Windsor—travel again as she had done the last week, and get among the flat green fields with the high hedges round them, where nobody could see her or know her; and there, perhaps, when there was nothing else she could do, she should get courage to drown herself in some pond like that in the Scantlands.

* * * * *

She chose to go to Stratford-on-Avon again, where she had gone before by mistake; for she remembered some grassy fields on her former way towards it—fields among which she thought she might find just the sort of pool she had in her mind. Yet she took care of her money still; she carried her basket: death seemed still a long way off, and life was so strong in her! She craved food and rest—she hastened towards them at the very moment she was picturing to herself the bank from which she would leap towards death. It was already five days since she had left Windsor, for she had wandered about, always avoiding speech or questioning looks, and

recovering her air of proud self-dependence whenever she was under observation, choosing her decent lodging at night, and dressing herself neatly in the morning, and setting off on her way steadily, or remaining under shelter if it rained, as if she had a happy life to cherish.

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There it was, black under the darkening sky: no motion, no sound near. She set down her basket, and then sank down herself on the grass, trembling. The pool had its wintry depth now: by the time it got shallow, as she remembered the pools did at Hayslope, in the summer, no one could find out that it was her body. But then there was her basket—she must hide that too: she must throw it into the water—make it heavy with stones first, and then throw it in. She got up to look about for stones, and soon brought five or six, which she laid down beside her basket, and then sat down again. There was no need to hurry—there was all the night to drown herself in. She sat leaning her elbow on the basket. She was weary, hungry. There were some buns in her basket—three, which she had supplied herself with at the place where she ate her dinner. She took them out now, and ate them eagerly, and then sat still again, looking at the pool. The soothed sensation that came over her from the satisfaction of her hunger, and this fixed dreamy attitude, brought on drowsiness, and presently her head sank down on her knees. She was fast asleep.

When she awoke it was deep night, and she felt chill. She was frightened at this darkness—frightened at the long night before her. If she *could* but throw herself into the water! No, not yet. She began to walk about, that she might get warm again, as if

she would have more resolution then. Oh, how long the time was in that darkness! The bright hearth and the warmth and the voices of home—the secure uprising and lying down—the familiar fields, the familiar people, the Sundays and holidays with their simple joys of dress and feasting—all the sweets of her young life rushed before her now, and she seemed to be stretching her arms towards them across a great gulf. She set her teeth when she thought of Arthur: she cursed him, without knowing what her cursing would do: she wished he too might know desolation, and cold, and a life of shame that he dared not end by death.

The horror of this cold, and darkness, and solitude —out of all human reach—became greater every long minute; it was almost as if she were dead already, and knew that she was dead, and longed to get back to life again. But no: she was alive still: she had not taken the dreadful leap. She felt a strange contradictory wretchedness and exultation: wretchedness, that she did not dare to face death; exultation, that she was still in life—that she might yet know light and warmth again. She walked backwards and forwards to warm herself, beginning to discern something of the objects around her, as her eyes became accustomed to the night: the darker line of the hedge, the rapid motion of some living creature—perhaps a field-mouse—rushing across the grass. She no longer felt as if the darkness hedged her in: she thought she could walk back across the field, and get over the stile; and then, in the very next field she thought she remembered there was a hovel of furze near a sheepfold. If she could get into that hovel, she would be warmer; she could pass the night there, for that was what Alick did at Hayslope in lambing-

time. The thought of this hovel brought the energy of a new hope ; she took up her basket and walked across the field, but it was some time before she got in the right direction for the stile. The exercise, and the occupation of finding the stile, were a stimulus to her, however, and lightened the horror of the darkness and solitude. There were sheep in the next field, and she startled a group as she set down her basket and got over the stile ; and the sound of their movement comforted her, for it assured her that her impression was right : this *was* the field where she had seen the hovel, for it was the field where the sheep were. Right on along the path, and she would get to it. She reached the opposite gate, and felt her way along its rails, and the rails of the sheepfold, till her hand encountered the pricking of the gorsy wall. Delicious sensation ! She had found the shelter ; she groped her way, touching the prickly gorse, to the door, and pushed it open. It was an ill-smelling close place, but warm, and there was straw on the ground : Hetty sank down on the straw with a sense of escape. Tears came—she had never shed tears before since she left Windsor—tears and sobs of hysterical joy that she had still hold of life, that she was still on the familiar earth, with the sheep near her.

[*When Hetty does not come back from Snowfield Adam goes to fetch her. He finds that Dinah is in Leeds, and Hetty has not been seen. After trying to trace Hetty he returns home, suspecting that Arthur may have summoned her.*]

He [Seth] came downstairs and opened the inner door leading from the house-place into the workshop, intending to let out Gyp ; but he stood still in the

doorway, smitten with a sudden shock at the sight of Adam seated listlessly on the bench, pale, unwashed, with sunken blank eyes, almost like a drunkard in the morning. But Seth felt in an instant what the marks meant: not drunkenness, but some great calamity. Adam looked up at him without speaking, and Seth moved forward towards the bench, himself trembling so that speech did not come readily.

"God have mercy on us, Addy," he said, in a low voice, sitting down on the bench beside Adam, "what is it?"

Adam was unable to speak: the strong man, accustomed to suppress the signs of sorrow, had felt his heart swell like a child's at this first approach of sympathy. He fell on Seth's neck and sobbed.

Seth was prepared for the worst now, for, even in his recollections of their boyhood, Adam had never sobbed before.

"Is it death, Adam? Is she dead?" he asked, in a low tone, when Adam raised his head and was recovering himself.

"No, lad; but she's gone—gone away from us. She's never been to Snowfield. Dinah's been gone to Leeds ever since last Friday was a fortnight, the very day Hetty set out. I can't find out where she went after she got to Stoniton."

Seth was silent from utter astonishment: he knew nothing that could suggest to him a reason for Hetty's going away.

"Hast any notion what she's done it for?" he said, at last.

"She can't ha' loved me: she didn't like our marriage when it came nigh—that must be it," said Adam. He had determined to mention no further reason.

"I hear mother stirring," said Seth. "Must we tell her?"

"No, not yet," said Adam, rising from the bench, and pushing the hair from his face, as if he wanted to rouse himself. "I can't have her told yet; and I must set out on another journey directly, after I've been to the village and th' Hall Farm. I can't tell thee where I'm going, and thee must say to her I'm gone on business as nobody is to know anything about. I'll go and wash myself now." Adam moved towards the door of the workshop, but after a step or two, he turned round, and meeting Seth's eyes with a calm sad glance, he said, "I must take all the money out o' the tin box, lad; but if anything happens to me, all the rest 'll be thine, to take care o' mother with."

Seth was pale and trembling: he felt there was some terrible secret under all this. "Brother," he said, faintly—he never called Adam "brother," except in solemn moments—"I don't believe you'll do anything as you can't ask God's blessing on."

"Nay, lad," said Adam, "don't be afraid. I'm for doing nought but what's a man's duty."

[*Adam goes to Mr. Irwine.*]

"I come to you, sir," he said, "as the gentleman I look up to most of anybody. I've something very painful to tell you—something as it'll pain you to hear, as well as me to tell. But if I speak o' the wrong other people have done, you'll see I didn't speak till I'd good reason."

Mr. Irwine nodded slowly, and Adam went on rather tremulously.

"You was t' ha' married me and Hetty Sorrel,

you know, sir, o' the fifteenth o' this month. I thought she loved me, and I was th' happiest man i' the parish. But a dreadful blow's come upon me."

Mr. Irwine started up from his chair, as if involuntarily, but then, determined to control himself, walked to the window and looked out.

"She's gone away, sir, and we don't know where. She said she was going to Snowfield o' Friday was a fortnight, and I went last Sunday to fetch her back; but she'd never been there, and she took the coach to Stoniton, and beyond that I can't trace her. But now I'm going a long journey to look for her, and I can't trust t' anybody but you where I'm going."

Mr. Irwine came back from the window and sat down.

"Have you no idea of the reason why she went away?" he said.

"It's plain enough she didn't want to marry me, sir," said Adam. "She didn't like it when it came so near. But that isn't all, I doubt. There's something else I must tell you, sir. There's somebody else concerned besides me."

A gleam of something—it was almost like relief or joy—came across the eager anxiety of Mr. Irwine's face at that moment. Adam was looking on the ground, and paused a little: the next words were hard to speak. But when he went on, he lifted up his head and looked straight at Mr. Irwine. He would do the thing he had resolved to do, without flinching.

"You know who's the man I've reckoned my greatest friend," he said, "and used to be proud to think as I should pass my life i' working for him, and had felt so ever since we were lads——"

Mr. Irwine, as if all self-control had forsaken him,

grasped Adam's arm, which lay on the table, and, clutching it tightly like a man in pain, said, with pale lips and a low hurried voice—

"No, Adam, no—don't say it, for God's sake!"

Adam, surprised at the violence of Mr. Irwine's feeling, repented of the words that had passed his lips, and sat in distressed silence. The grasp on his arm gradually relaxed, and Mr. Irwine threw himself back in his chair, saying, "Go on—I must know it."

[*Adam tells what he knows of Hetty and Arthur.*]

"Adam, my dear friend, you have had some hard trials in your life. You can bear sorrow manfully, as well as act manfully: God requires both tasks at our hands. And there is a heavier sorrow coming upon you than any you have yet known. But you are not guilty—you have not the worst of all sorrows. God help him who has!"

The two pale faces looked at each other; in Adam's there was trembling suspense, in Mr. Irwine's hesitating, shrinking pity. But he went on.

"I have had news of Hetty this morning. She is not gone to *him*. She is in Stonyshire—at Stoniton."

Adam started up from his chair, as if he thought he could have leaped to her that moment. But Mr. Irwine laid hold of his arm again, and said, persuasively, "Wait, Adam, wait." So he sat down.

"She is in a very unhappy position—one which will make it worse for you to find her, my poor friend, than to have lost her for ever."

Adam's lips moved tremulously, but no sound came. They moved again, and he whispered, "Tell me."

"She has been arrested . . . she is in prison."

It was as if an insulting blow had brought back the

spirit of resistance into Adam. The blood rushed to his face, and he said, loudly and sharply—

"For what?"

"For a great crime—the murder of her child."

"It *can't be!*" Adam almost shouted, starting up from his chair, and making a stride towards the door; but he turned round again, setting his back against the book-case, and looking fiercely at Mr. Irwine. "It isn't possible. She never had a child. She can't be guilty. *Who* says it?"

"God grant she may be innocent, Adam. We can still hope she is."

"But who says she is guilty?" said Adam, violently. "Tell me everything."

"Here is a letter from the magistrate before whom she was taken, and the constable who arrested her is in the dining-room. She will not confess her name or where she comes from; but I fear, I fear there can be no doubt it is Hetty. The description of her person corresponds, only that she is said to look very pale and ill. She had a small red-leather pocket-book in her pocket, with two names written in it—one at the beginning, 'Hetty Sorrel, Hayslope,' and the other near the end, 'Dinah Morris, Snowfield.' She will not say which is her own name—she denies everything and will answer no questions; and application has been made to me, as a magistrate, that I may take measures for identifying her, for it was thought probable that the name which stands first is her own name."

"But what proof have they got against her, if it *is* Hetty?" said Adam, still violently, with an effort that seemed to shake his whole frame. "I'll not believe it. It couldn't ha' been, and none of us know it."

" Terrible proof that she was under the temptation to commit the crime ; but we have room to hope that she did not really commit it. Try and read that letter, Adam."

Adam took the letter between his shaking hands, and tried to fix his eyes steadily on it. Mr. Irwine meanwhile went out to give some orders. When he came back, Adam's eyes were still on the first page—he couldn't read—he could not put the words together, and make out what they meant. He threw it down at last, and clenched his fist.

" It's *his* doing," he said ; " if there's been any crime, it's at his door, not at hers. *He* taught her to deceive—*he* deceived me at first. Let 'em put *him* on his trial—let him stand in court beside her, and I'll tell 'em how he got hold of her heart, and 'ticed her t'evil, and then lied to me. Is *he* to go free, while they lay all the punishment on her . . . so weak and young ? "

The image called up by these last words gave a new direction to poor Adam's maddened feelings. He was silent, looking at the corner of the room as if he saw something there. Then he burst out again, in a tone of appealing anguish—

" I *can't* bear it . . . O God, it's too hard to lay upon me—it's too hard to think she's wicked."

Mr. Irwine had sat down again in silence : he was too wise to utter soothing words at present, and indeed the sight of Adam before him, with that look of sudden age which sometimes comes over a young face in moments of terrible emotion—the hard, bloodless look of the skin, the deep lines about the quivering mouth, the furrows in the brow—the sight of this strong, firm man shattered by the invisible stroke of sorrow, moved him so deeply that speech

was not easy. Adam stood motionless, with his eyes vacantly fixed in this way for a minute or two; in that short space he was living through all his love again.

"She can't ha' done it," he said, still without moving his eyes, as if he were only talking to himself; "it was fear made her hide it. . . . I forgive her for deceiving me . . . I forgive thee, Hetty . . . thee wast deceived too . . . it's gone hard wi' thee, my poor Hetty . . . but they'll never make me believe it."

He was silent again for a few moments, and then he said with fierce abruptness—

"I'll go to him—I'll bring him back—I'll make him go and look at her in her misery—he shall look at her till he can't forget it—it shall follow him night and day—as long as he lives it shall follow him—he shan't escape wi' lies this time—I'll fetch him, I'll drag him myself."

In the act of going towards the door, Adam paused automatically and looked about for his hat, quite unconscious where he was, or who was present with him. Mr. Irwine had followed him, and now took him by the arm, saying, in a quiet but decided tone—

"No, Adam, no; I'm sure you will wish to stay and see what good can be done for *her*, instead of going on a useless errand of vengeance. The punishment will surely fall without your aid. Besides, he is no longer in Ireland: he must be on his way home —or would be, long before you arrived; for his grandfather, I know, wrote for him to come at least ten days ago. I want you now to go with me to Stoniton. I have ordered a horse for you to ride with us, as soon as you can compose yourself."

While Mr. Irwine was speaking, Adam recovered his

consciousness of the actual scene : he rubbed his hair off his forehead and listened.

" Remember," Mr. Irwine went on, " there are others to think of, and act for, besides yourself, Adam : there are Hetty's friends, the good Poysers, on whom this stroke will fall more heavily than I can bear to think. I expect it from your strength of mind, Adam—from your sense of duty to God and man—that you will try to act as long as action can be of any use."

[*Mr. Irwine returns from Stoniton, and learns that old Squire Donnithorne is dead.*]

Before ten o'clock on Thursday morning the home at the Hall Farm was a house of mourning for a misfortune felt to be worse than death. The sense of family dishonour was too keen even in the kind-hearted Martin Poyser the younger, to leave room for any compassion towards Hetty. He and his father were simple-minded farmers, proud of their untarnished character, proud that they came of a family which had held up its head and paid its way as far back as its name was in the parish register ; and Hetty had brought disgrace on them all—disgrace that could never be wiped out. That was the all-conquering feeling in the mind both of father and son —the scorching sense of disgrace which neutralised all other sensibility ; and Mr. Irwine was struck with surprise to observe that Mrs. Poyser was less severe than her husband. We are often startled by the severity of mild people on exceptional occasions ; the reason is, that mild people are most liable to be under the yoke of traditional impressions.

" I'm willing to pay any money as is wanted to-

wards trying to bring her off," said Martin the younger when Mr. Irwine was gone, while the old grandfather was crying in the opposite chair, " but I'll not go nigh her, nor ever see her again by my own will. She's made our bread bitter to us for all our lives to come, an' we shall ne'er hold up our heads i' this parish nor i' any other. The parson talks o' folks pitying us : it's poor amends pity 'ull make us."

" Pity ? " said the grandfather sharply, " I ne'er wanted folks's pity i' *my* life afore . . . an' I mun begin to be looked down on now, an' me turned seventy-two last St. Thomas's, an' all th' under-bearers and pall-bearers as I 'n picked for my funeral are i' this parish and the next to 't. . . . It's o' no use now . . . I mun be ta'en to the grave by strangers."

" Don't fret so, father," said Mrs. Poyser, who had spoken very little, being almost overawed by her husband's unusual hardness and decision. " You'll have your children wi' you ; and there's the lads and the little un 'ull grow up in a new parish as well as i' th' old un."

" Ah, there's no staying i' this country for us now," said Mr. Poyser, and the hard tears trickled slowly down his round cheeks. " We thought it 'ud be bad luck if the old Squire gave us notice this Lady Day, but I must gi' notice myself now, an' see if there can anybody be got to come an' take to the crops as I 'n put i' the ground ; for I wonna stay upo' that man's land a day longer nor I'm forced to 't. An' me, as thought him such a good upright young man, as I should be glad when he come to be our landlord. I'll ne'er lift my hat to 'm again, nor sit i' the same church wi' 'm . . . a man as has brought shame on respectable folks . . . an' pretended to be such a

friend t' everybody. . . . Poor Adam there . . . a fine friend he's been t' Adam, making speeches an' talking so fine, an' all the while poisoning the lad's life, as it's much if he can stay i' this country any more nor we can."

"An' you t' ha' to go into court, and own you're akin t' her," said the old man. "Why, they'll cast it up to the little un, as isn't four 'ear old, some day —they'll cast it up t' her as she'd a cousin tried at the 'sizes for murder."

"It'll be their own wickedness, then," said Mrs. Poyser with a sob in her voice. "But there's One above 'ull take care o' th' innicent child, else it's but little truth they tell us at church. It'll be harder nor ever to die an' leave the little uns, an' nobody to be a mother to 'm."

[*Bartle Massey, the schoolmaster, joins Adam at Stoniton. They are visited by Mr. Irwine.*]

"Have you seen her, sir?" said Adam, tremulously.

"Yes, Adam; I and the chaplain have both been with her this evening."

"Did you ask her, sir . . . did you say anything about me?"

"Yes," said Mr. Irwine, with some hesitation, "I spoke of you. I said you wished to see her before the trial, if she consented."

As Mr. Irwine paused, Adam looked at him with eager, questioning eyes.

"You know she shrinks from seeing any one, Adam. It is not only you—some fatal influence seems to have shut up her heart against her fellow-creatures. She has scarcely said anything more than 'No,' either to me or the chaplain. Three or four days ago, before

you were mentioned to her, when I asked her if there was any one of her family whom she would like to see —to whom she could open her mind, she said, with a violent shudder, ' Tell them not to come near me —I won't see any of them.' " . . .

Adam started up from his chair, and seized his hat which lay on the table. But he stood still then, and looked at Mr. Irwine, as if he had a question to ask, which it was yet difficult to utter. Bartle Massey rose quietly, turned the key in the door, and put it in his pocket.

" Is he come back ? " said Adam at last.

" No, he is not," said Mr. Irwine quietly. " Lay down your hat, Adam, unless you like to walk out with me for a little fresh air. I fear you have not been out again to-day."

" You needn't deceive me, sir," said Adam, looking hard at Mr. Irwine, and speaking in a tone of angry suspicion. " You needn't be afraid of me. I only want justice. I want him to feel what she feels. It's his work . . . she was a child as it 'ud ha' gone t' anybody's heart to look at . . . I don't care what she's done . . it was him brought her to it. And he shall know it . . . he shall feel it . . . if there's a just God, he shall feel what it is t' ha' brought a child like her to sin and misery——"

" I'm not deceiving you, Adam," said Mr. Irwine. " Arthur Donnithorne is not come back—was not come back when I left. I have left a letter for him : he will know all as soon as he arrives."

" But you don't mind about it," said Adam, indignantly. " You think it doesn't matter as she lies there in shame and misery, and he knows nothing about it—he suffers nothing."

" Adam, he *will* know—he *will* suffer, long and

bitterly. He has a heart and a conscience: I can't be entirely deceived in his character. I am convinced —I am sure he didn't fall under temptation without a struggle. He may be weak, but he is not callous, not coldly selfish. I am persuaded that this will be a shock of which he will feel the effects all his life. Why do you crave vengeance in this way? No amount of torture that you could inflict on *him* could benefit *her*."

"No—O God, no," Adam groaned out, sinking on his chair again; "but then, that's the deepest curse of all . . . that's what makes the blackness of it . . . *it can never be undone*. My poor Hetty . . . she can never be my sweet Hetty again . . . the prettiest thing God had made—smiling up at me . . . I thought she loved me . . . and was good——"

[*Bartle Massey goes to the trial, and returns to Adam.*]

"Yes, my lad, yes: the truth is the best thing to tell. It must come at last. The doctor's evidence is heavy on her—is heavy. But she's gone on denying she's had a child from first to last: these poor, silly women-things—they've not the sense to know it's no use denying what's proved. It'll make against her with the jury, I doubt, her being so obstinate: they may be less for recommending her to mercy, if the verdict's against her. But Mr. Irwine 'll leave no stone unturned with the judge—you may rely upon that, Adam."

[*Adam returns with Bartle Massey to the court.*]

But Hetty did not see him. She was standing in the same position Bartle Massey had described, her hands crossed over each other, and her eyes fixed on

them. Adam had not dared to look at her in the first moments, but at last, when the attention of the court was withdrawn by the proceedings, he turned his face towards her with a resolution not to shrink.

Why did they say she was so changed? In the corpse we love, it is the *likeness* we see—it is the likeness, which makes itself felt the more keenly because something else *was* and *is not*. There they were—the sweet face and neck, with the dark tendrils of hair, the long dark lashes, the rounded cheek and the pouting lips: pale and thin—yes—but like Hetty, and only Hetty.

[*More evidence is given.*]

"My name is Sarah Stone. I am a widow, and keep a small shop licensed to sell tobacco, snuff, and tea, in Church Lane, Stoniton. The prisoner at the bar is the same young woman who came, looking ill and tired, with a basket on her arm, and asked for a lodging at my house on Saturday evening, the 27th of February. She had taken the house for a public, because there was a figure against the door.

* * * * *

The witness then stated that in the night a child was born, and she identified the baby-clothes then shown to her as those in which she had herself dressed the child.

"Those are the clothes. I made them myself, and had kept them by me ever since my last child was born. I took a deal of trouble both for the child and the mother. I couldn't help taking to the little thing and being anxious about it. I didn't send for a doctor, for there seemed no need. I told the mother

in the day-time she must tell me the name of her friends, and where they lived, and let me write to them. She said, by and by she would write herself, but not to-day. She would have no nay, but she would get up and be dressed, in spite of everything I could say. She said she felt quite strong enough; and it was wonderful what spirit she showed. . . . I left the prisoner sitting up by the fire in the kitchen with the baby on her lap. She hadn't cried or seemed low at all, as she did the night before. I thought she had a strange look with her eyes, and she got a bit flushed towards evening. I was afraid of the fever, and I thought I'd call and ask an acquaintance of mine, an experienced woman, to come back with me when I went out. It was a very dark night. I didn't fasten the door behind me. . . . . It was an hour and a half before we got back, and when we went in, the candle was standing burning just as I left it, but the prisoner and the baby were both gone. She'd taken her cloak and bonnet, but she'd left the basket and the things in it."

* * * * *

"My name is John Olding. I am a labourer, and live at Tedd's Hole, two miles out of Stoniton. A week last Monday, towards one o'clock in the afternoon, I was going towards Hetton Coppice, and about a quarter of a mile from the coppice I saw the prisoner, in a red cloak, sitting under a bit of a haystack not far off the stile. She got up when she saw me, and seemed as if she'd be walking on the other way. . . . I hadn't got far out of the road into one of the open places, before I heard a strange cry. I thought it didn't come from any animal I knew, but I wasn't for stopping to look about just then. But it went on, and seemed so strange to me in that place, I

couldn't help stopping to look. . . . And just as I was stooping and laying down the stakes, I saw something odd and round and whitish lying on the ground under a nut-bush by the side of me. And I stooped down on hands and knees to pick it up. And I saw it was a little baby's hand."

At these words a thrill ran through the court. Hetty was visibly trembling: now, for the first time, she seemed to be listening to what a witness said.

"There was a lot of timber-choppings put together just where the ground went hollow, like, under the bush, and the hand came out from among them. But there was a hole left in one place, and I could see down it, and see the child's head; and I made haste and did away the turf and the choppings, and took out the child. It had got comfortable clothes on, but its body was cold, and I thought it must be dead. I made haste back with it out of the wood, and took it home to my wife. She said it was dead, and I'd better take it to the parish and tell the constable. And I said, 'I'll lay my life it's that young woman's child as I met going to the coppice.' But she seemed to be gone clean out of sight. And I took the child on to Hetton parish and told the constable, and we went on to Justice Hardy. And then we went looking after the young woman till dark at night, and we went and gave information at Stoniton, as they might stop her. And the next morning, another constable came to me, to go with him to the spot where I found the child. And when we got there, there was the prisoner a-sitting against the bush where I found the child; and she cried out when she saw us, but she never offered to move. She'd got a big piece of bread on her lap."

* * * * *

It was not very long, hardly more than a quarter of an hour, before the knock which told that the jury had come to their decision, fell as a signal for silence on every ear. It is sublime—that sudden pause of a great multitude, which tells that one soul moves in them all. Deeper and deeper the silence seemed to become, like the deepening night, while the jurymen's names were called over, and the prisoner was made to hold up her hand, and the jury were asked for their verdict.

"Guilty."

It was the verdict everyone expected, but there was a sigh of disappointment from some hearts, that it was followed by no recommendation to mercy. Still the sympathy of the court was not with the prisoner; the unnaturalness of her crime stood out the more harshly by the side of her hard immovability and obstinate silence. Even the verdict, to distant eyes, had not appeared to move her; but those who were near saw her trembling.

The stillness was less intense until the judge put on his black cap, and the chaplain in his canonicals was observed behind him. Then it deepened again, before the crier had had time to command silence. If any sound were heard, it must have been the sound of beating hearts. The judge spoke—

"Hester Sorrel."

The blood rushed to Hetty's face, and then fled back again, as she looked up at the judge, and kept her wide-open eyes fixed on him, as if fascinated by fear. Adam had not yet turned towards her: there was a deep horror, like a great gulf, between them. But at the words, "and then to be hanged by the neck till you be dead," a piercing shriek rang through the hall. It was Hetty's shriek. Adam started to

his feet, and stretched out his arms towards her; but the arms could not reach her: she had fallen down in a fainting fit, and was carried out of court.

[*Arthur returns to Hayslope, full of confidence as to the way in which he shall fill his grandfather's place. He finds a letter from Mr. Irwine.*]

"*I send this letter to meet you on your arrival, Arthur, because I may then be at Stoniton, whither I am called by the most painful duty it has ever been given me to perform; and it is right that you should know what I have to tell you without delay.*

"*I will not attempt to add by one word of reproach to the retribution that is now falling on you: any other words that I could write at this moment must be weak and unmeaning by the side of those in which I must tell you the simple fact.*

"*Hetty Sorrel is in prison, and will be tried on Friday for the crime of child-murder——*"

Arthur read no more. He started up from his chair, and stood for a single minute with a sense of violent convulsion in his whole frame, as if the life were going out of him with horrible throbs; but the next minute he had rushed out of the room, still clutching the letter—he was hurrying along the corridor, and down the stairs into the hall. Mills was still there, but Arthur did not see him, as he passed like a hunted man across the hall and out along the gravel.

[*Dinah goes to the prison.*]

"Hetty . . . it's Dinah."

Again there was a slight, startled movement through Hetty's frame, and without uncovering her face, she raised her head a little, as if listening.

" Hetty . . . Dinah is come to you."

After a moment's pause, Hetty lifted her head slowly and timidly from her knees, and raised her eyes. The two pale faces were looking at each other, one with a wild hard despair in it, the other full of sad, yearning love. Dinah unconsciously opened her arms and stretched them out.

" Don't you know me, Hetty? Don't you remember Dinah? Did you think I wouldn't come to you in trouble? "

Hetty kept her eyes fixed on Dinah's face—at first like an animal that gazes, and gazes, and keeps aloof.

" I'm come to be with you, Hetty—not to leave you—to stay with you—to be your sister to the last."

Slowly, while Dinah was speaking, Hetty rose, took a step forward, and was clasped in Dinah's arms.

They stood so a long while, for neither of them felt the impulse to move apart again. . . . The light got fainter as they stood, and when at last they sat down on the straw pallet together, their faces had become indistinct.

* * * * *

" Hetty," she said, gently, " do you know who it is that sits by your side? "

" Yes," Hetty answered, slowly, " it's Dinah."

" And do you remember the time when we were at the Hall Farm together, and that night when I told you to be sure and think of me as a friend in trouble? "

" Yes," said Hetty. Then, after a pause, she added, " But you can do nothing for me. You can't make 'em do anything. They'll hang me o' Monday—it's Friday now."

As Hetty said the last words, she clung closer to Dinah, shuddering.

" No, Hetty, I can't save you from that death. But isn't the suffering less hard when you have somebody with you, that feels for you—that you can speak to, and say what's in your heart? . . . Yes, Hetty: you lean on me: you are glad to have me with you."

" You won't leave me, Dinah? You'll keep close to me? "

" No, Hetty, I won't leave you. I'll stay with you to the last. . . . But, Hetty, there is someone else in this cell besides me, someone close to you."

Hetty said in a frightened whisper, " Who? "

" Someone who has been with you through all your hours of sin and trouble—who has known every thought you have had—has seen where you went, where you lay down and rose up again, and all the deeds you have tried to hide in darkness. And on Monday, when I can't follow you—when my arms can't reach you—when death has parted us—He who is with us now, and knows all, will be with you then. It makes no difference—whether we live or die, we are in the presence of God."

" Oh, Dinah, won't nobody do anything for me? *Will* they hang me for certain? . . . I wouldn't mind if they'd let me live."

* * * * *

Hetty obeyed Dinah's movement and sank on her knees. They still held each other's hands, and there was long silence. Then Dinah said—

" Hetty, we are before God: He is waiting for you to tell the truth."

Still there was silence. At last Hetty spoke, in a tone of beseeching—

" Dinah . . . help me . . . I can't feel anything like you . . . my heart is hard."

* * * * *

"Dinah," Hetty sobbed out, throwing her arms round Dinah's neck, "I will speak . . . I will tell . . . I won't hide it any more. . . ."

[*She tells her story.*]

"And I walked on and on, and I hardly felt the ground I trod on; and it got lighter, for there came the moon—oh, Dinah, it frightened me when it first looked at me out o' the clouds—it never looked so before; and I turned out of the road into the fields, for I was afraid o' meeting anybody with the moon shining on me. And I came to a haystack, where I thought I could lie down and keep myself warm all night. There was a place cut into it, where I could make me a bed; and I lay comfortable, and the baby was warm against me; and I must have gone to sleep for a good while, for when I woke it was morning, but not very light, and the baby was crying. And I saw a wood a little way off. . . .

"I thought perhaps somebody 'ud come and take care of it, and then it wouldn't die. And I made haste out of the wood; but I could hear it crying all the while; and when I got out into the fields, it was as if I was held fast—I couldn't go away, for all I wanted so to go.

* * * * *

". . . But oh, the baby's crying kept waking me; and I thought that man as looked at me so was come and laying hold of me. But I must have slept a long while at last, though I didn't know; for when I got up and went out of the barn, I didn't know whether it was night or morning. But it was morning, for it kept getting lighter: and I turned back the

way I'd come. I couldn't help it, Dinah; it was the baby's crying made me go: and yet I was frightened to death. I thought that man in the smock-frock 'ud see me, and know I put the baby there. But I went on, for all that: I'd left off thinking about going home—it had gone out o' my mind. I saw nothing but that place in the wood where I'd buried the baby . . . I see it now. Oh, Dinah! shall I allays see it?"

[*Adam goes to see Hetty in prison.*]

He could not see her when he entered, for agitation deadened his senses, and the dim cell was almost dark to him. He stood a moment after the door closed behind him, trembling and stupefied.

But he began to see through the dimness—to see the dark eyes lifted up to him once more, but with no smile in them. O God, how sad they looked!

* * * * *

She was clinging close to Dinah; her cheek was against Dinah's. It seemed as if her last faint strength and hope lay in that contact; and the pitying love that shone out from Dinah's face looked like a visible pledge of the Invisible Mercy.

When the sad eyes met—when Hetty and Adam looked at each other, she felt the change in him too, and it seemed to strike her with fresh fear. It was the first time she had seen any being whose face seemed to reflect the change in herself; Adam was a new image of the dreadful past and the dreadful present. She trembled more as she looked at him.

"Speak to him, Hetty," Dinah said; "tell him what is in your heart."

Hetty obeyed her, like a little child.

" Adam . . . I'm very sorry . . . I behaved very wrong to you . . . will you forgive me . . . before I die ? "

Adam answered with a half sob : " Yes, I forgive thee, Hetty : I forgave thee long ago."

It had seemed to Adam as if his brain would burst with the anguish of meeting Hetty's eyes in the first moments ; but the sound of her voice uttering these penitent words, touched a chord which had been less strained ; there was a sense of relief from what was becoming unbearable, and the rare tears came—they had never come before, since he had hung on Seth's neck in the beginning of his sorrow. . . .

" Will you kiss me again, Adam, for all I've been so wicked ? "

Adam took the blanched, wasted hand she put out to him, and they gave each other the solemn unspeakable kiss of a lifelong parting.

* * * * *

It was a sight that some people remembered better even than their own sorrows—the sight in that gray clear morning, when the fatal cart with the two young women in it was descried by the waiting, watching multitude, cleaving its way towards the hideous symbol of a deliberately-inflicted sudden death.

All Stoniton had heard of Dinah Morris, the young Methodist woman, who had brought the obstinate criminal to confess, and there was as much eagerness to see her as to see the wretched Hetty.

But Dinah was hardly conscious of the multitude. When Hetty had caught sight of the vast crowd in the distance, she had clutched Dinah convulsively.

" Close your eyes, Hetty," Dinah said, " and let us pray without ceasing to God."

And in a low voice, as the cart went slowly along through the midst of the gazing crowd, she poured forth her soul with the wrestling intensity of a last pleading, for the trembling creature that clung to her and clutched her as the only visible sign of love and pity.

Dinah did not know that the crowd was silent, gazing at her with a sort of awe—she did not even know how near they were to the fatal spot, when the cart stopped, and she shrank appalled at a loud shout, hideous to her ear, like a vast yell of demons. Hetty's shriek mingled with the sound, and they clasped each other in mutual horror.

But it was not a shout of execration—not a yell of exultant cruelty.

It was a shout of sudden excitement at the appearance of a horseman cleaving the crowd at full gallop. The horse is hot and distressed, but answers to the desperate spurring ; the rider looks as if his eyes were glazed by madness, and he saw nothing but what was unseen by others. See, he has something in his hand—he is holding it up as if it were a signal.

The Sheriff knows him : it is Arthur Donnithorne, carrying in his hand the hard-won release from death.

[*Adam and Arthur meet and go to the Hermitage in the woods.*]

" If I were going to stay here and act as landlord," he [Arthur] added, presently, with still more eagerness, " if I were careless about what I've done—what I've been the cause of, you would have some excuse, Adam, for going away and encouraging

others to go. You would have some excuse then for trying to make the evil worse. But when I tell you I'm going away for years—when you know what that means for me, how it cuts off every plan of happiness I've ever formed—it is impossible for a sensible man like you to believe that there is any real ground for the Poysers refusing to remain. I know their feeling about disgrace—Mr. Irwine has told me all; but he is of opinion that they might be persuaded out of this idea that they are disgraced in the eyes of their neighbours, and that they can't remain on my estate, if you would join him in his efforts—if you would stay yourself, and go on managing the old woods. . . .

"I wouldn't act so towards you, I know, if you were in my place and I in yours, I should try to help you to do the best."

Adam made a hasty movement on his chair, and looked on the ground. Arthur went on—

"Perhaps you've never done anything you've had bitterly to repent of in your life, Adam; if you had, you would be more generous. You would know then that it's worse for me than for you."

Arthur rose from his seat with the last words, and went to one of the windows, looking out and turning his back on Adam, as he continued passionately—

"Haven't *I* loved her too! Didn't I see her yesterday? Shan't I carry the thought of her about with me as much as you will? And don't you think you would suffer more if you'd been in fault?"

There was silence for several minutes, for the struggle in Adam's mind was not easily decided. Facile natures, whose emotions have little permanence, can hardly understand how much inward resistance he overcame before he rose from his seat and turned

towards Arthur. Arthur heard the movement, and turning round, met the sad but softened look with which Adam said—

"It's true what you say, sir: I'm hard—it's in my nature. I was too hard with my father, for doing wrong. I've been a bit hard to everybody but *her*. I felt as if nobody pitied her enough—her suffering cut into me so; and when I thought the folks at the Farm were too hard with her, I said I'd never be hard to anybody myself again. But feeling overmuch about her has perhaps made me unfair to you. I've known what it is in my life to repent and feel it's too late: I felt I'd been too harsh to my father when he was gone from me—I feel it now, when I think of him. I've no right to be hard towards them as have done wrong and repent."

Adam spoke these words with the firm distinctness of a man who is resolved to leave nothing unsaid that he is bound to say; but he went on with more hesitation—

"I wouldn't shake hands with you once, sir, when you asked me—but if you're willing to do it now, for all I refused then——"

Arthur's white hand was in Adam's large grasp in an instant, and with that action there was a strong rush, on both sides, of the old boyish affection.

"Adam," Arthur said, impelled to full confession now, "it would never have happened, if I'd known you loved her. That would have helped to save me from it. And I *did* struggle: I never meant to injure her." . . .

"How did she seem when you left her, sir?"

"Don't ask me, Adam," Arthur said; "I feel sometimes as if I should go mad with thinking of her looks and what she said to me, and then, that I

couldn't get a full pardon—that I couldn't save her from that wretched fate of being transported—that I can do nothing for her all those years; and she may die under it, and never know comfort any more."

"Ah, sir," said Adam, for the first time feeling his own pain merged in sympathy for Arthur, "you and me'll often be thinking o' the same thing, when we're a long way off one another. I'll pray God to help you, as I pray Him to help me."

[*There is a lapse of time, during which Dinah has been staying at the Hall Farm. She and Adam talk of her intended return to Snowfield.*]

"You know best, Dinah," said Adam. "I don't believe you'd go against the wishes of them that love you, and are akin to you, without a good and sufficient reason in your own conscience. I've no right to say anything about my being sorry: you know well enough what cause I have to put you above every other friend I've got; and if it had been ordered so that you could ha' been my sister, and lived with us all our lives, I should ha' counted it the greatest blessing as could happen to us now; but Seth tells me there's no hope o' that: your feelings are different; and perhaps I'm taking too much upon me to speak about it."

Dinah made no answer, and they walked on in silence for some yards, till they came to the stone stile; where, as Adam had passed through first, and turned round to give her his hand while she mounted the unusually high step, she could not prevent him from seeing her face. It struck him with surprise;

for the gray eyes, usually so mild and grave, had the bright uneasy glance which accompanies suppressed agitation, and the slight flush in her cheeks, with which she had come downstairs, was heightened to a deep rose-colour. She looked as if she were only sister to Dinah. Adam was silent with surprise and conjecture for some moments, and then he said—

"I hope I've not hurt or displeased you by what I've said, Dinah: perhaps I was making too free. I've no wish different from what you see to be best; and I am satisfied for you to live thirty mile off, if you think it right. I shall think of you just as much as I do now; for you're bound up with what I can no more help remembering, than I can help my heart beating."

Poor Adam! Thus do men blunder. Dinah made no answer, but she presently said—

"Have you heard any news from that poor young man since we last spoke of him?"

Dinah always called Arthur so; she had never lost the image of him as she had seen him in the prison.

"Yes," said Adam. "Mr Irwine read me part of a letter from him yesterday. It's pretty certain, they say, that there'll be a peace soon, though nobody believes it'll last long; but he says he doesn't mean to come home. He's no heart for it yet; and it's better for others that he should keep away. Mr. Irwine thinks he's in the right not to come: it's a sorrowful letter. He asks about you and the Poysers, as he always does. There's one thing in the letter cut me a good deal: 'You can't think what an old fellow I feel,' he says; 'I make no schemes now. I'm the best when I've a good day's march or fighting before me.'"

[*Lisbeth suggests to Adam that he should marry Dinah.*]

" Mother," he said, gravely, " thee't talking wild. Don't let me hear thee say such things again. It's no good talking o' what can never be. Dinah's not for marrying ; she's fixed her heart on a different sort o' life."

" Very like," said Lisbeth, impatiently, " very like she's none for marr'ing, when them as she'd be willin' t' marry wonna ax her. I shouldna ha' been for marrying thy feyther if he'd ne'er axed me ; an' she's as fond o' thee as e'er I war o' Thias, poor fellow."

The blood rushed to Adam's face, and for a few moments he was not quite conscious where he was : his mother and the kitchen had vanished from him, and he saw nothing but Dinah's face turned up towards his. It seemed as if there were a resurrection of his dead joy. But he woke up very speedily from that dream (the waking was chill and sad) ; for it would have been very foolish in him to believe his mother's words ; she could have no ground for them. He was prompted to express his disbelief very strongly—perhaps that he might call forth the proofs, if there were any to be offered.

" What dost say such things for, mother, when thee 'st got no foundation for 'em ? Thee know'st nothing as gives thee a right to say that."

" Then I knowna nought as gi'es me a right to say as the year's turned, for all I feel 't fust thing when I get up i' th' mornin'. She isna fond o' Seth, I reckon, is she ? She doesna want to marry *him ?* But I can see as she doesna behave tow'rt thee as she

does tow'rt Seth. She makes no more o' Seth's coming a-nigh her nor if he war Gyp, but she's all of a-tremble when thee 't a-sittin' down by her at breakfast, an' a-lookin' at her. Thee think'st thy mother knows nought, but she war alive afore thee wast born."

"But thee canstna be sure as the trembling means love?" said Adam, anxiously.

"Eh, what else should it mane? It isna hate, I reckon. An' what should she do but love thee? Thee't made to be loved — for where's there a straighter, cliverer man? An' what's it sinnify her bein' a Methody? It's on'y th' marigold i' th' parridge."

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Adam could sit still no longer. He rose, took down his hat, and went out into the fields.

The sunshine was on them: that early autumn sunshine which we should know was not summer's, even if there were not the touches of yellow on the lime and chestnut: the Sunday sunshine, too, which has more than autumnal calmness for the working man: the morning sunshine, which still leaves the dew-crystals on the fine gossamer webs in the shadow of the bushy hedgerows.

Adam needed the calm influence; he was amazed at the way in which this new thought of Dinah's love had taken possession of him, with an overmastering power that made all other feelings give way before the impetuous desire to know that the thought was true. Strange, that till that moment the possibility of their ever being lovers had never crossed his mind, and yet now, all his longing suddenly went out towards that possibility; he had no more doubt or

hesitation as to his own wishes than the bird that flies towards the opening through which the daylight gleams and the breath of heaven enters.

[*Adam consults Seth.*]

A new light had broken in on Seth. He turned round, and laying his hand on Adam's shoulder, said, "Why, wouldst like her to marry *thee*, brother?"

Adam looked doubtfully at Seth's inquiring eyes, and said, "Wouldst be hurt if she was to be fonder o' me than o' thee?"

"Nay," said Seth warmly, "how canst think it? Have I felt thy trouble so little, that I shouldna feel thy joy?"

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The door opened and Dinah stood before him, colouring deeply with the great surprise of seeing Adam at this hour, when she knew it was his regular practice to be at church. Yesterday he would have said to her without any difficulty, "I came to see you, Dinah: I knew the rest were not at home." But to-day something prevented him from saying that, and he put out his hand to her in silence. Neither of them spoke, and yet both wished they could speak, as Adam entered, and they sat down. Dinah took the chair she had just left; it was at the corner of the table near the window, and there was a book lying on the table, but it was not open: she had been sitting perfectly still, looking at the small bit of clear fire in the bright grate. Adam sat down opposite her, in Mr. Poyser's three-cornered chair.

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Adam looked at her: it was so sweet to look at her eyes, which had now a self-forgetful questioning in them—for a moment he forgot that he wanted to say anything, or that it was necessary to tell her what he meant.

"Dinah," he said suddenly, taking both her hands between his, "I love you with my whole heart and soul. I love you next to God who made me."

Dinah's lips became pale, like her cheeks, and she trembled violently under the shock of painful joy. Her hands were cold as death between Adam's. She could not draw them away, because he held them fast.

"Don't tell me you can't love me, Dinah. Don't tell me we must part, and pass our lives away from one another."

The tears were trembling in Dinah's eyes, and they fell before she could answer. But she spoke in a quiet low voice.

"Yes, dear Adam, we must submit to another Will. We must part."

"Not if you love me, Dinah—not if you love me," Adam said, passionately. "Tell me—tell me if you can love me better than a brother."

Dinah was too entirely reliant on the Divine will to attempt to achieve any end by a deceptive concealment. She was recovering now from the first shock of emotion, and she looked at Adam with simple, sincere eyes as she said—

"Yes, Adam, my heart is drawn strongly towards you; and of my own will, if I had no clear showing to the contrary, I could find my happiness in being near you, and ministering to you continually. I fear I should forget to rejoice and weep with others; nay, I fear I should forget the Divine presence, and seek no love but yours."

Adam did not speak immediately. They sat looking at each other in delicious silence—for the first sense of mutual love excludes other feelings; it will have the soul all to itself.

* * * * *

"But now, dear, dear Dinah, now you know I love you better than you love me . . . it's all different now. You won't think o' going: you'll stay, and be my dear wife, and I shall thank God for giving me life as I never thanked Him before."

"Adam, it's hard to me to turn a deaf ear . . . you know it's hard; but a great fear is upon me. It seems to me as if you were stretching out your arms to me, and beckoning me to come and take my ease, and live for my own delight, and Jesus, the Man of Sorrows, was standing looking towards me, and pointing to the sinful, and suffering, and afflicted. I have seen that again and again, when I have been sitting in stillness and darkness, and a great terror has come upon me lest I should become hard, and a lover of self, and no more bear willingly the Redeemer's cross."

Dinah had closed her eyes, and a faint shudder went through her. "Adam," she went on, "you wouldn't desire that we should seek a good through any unfaithfulness to the light that is in us; you wouldn't believe that could be a good. We are of one mind in that." . . .

"Let us go out into the sunshine, Dinah, and walk together. I'll speak no word to disturb you."

They went out, and walked towards the fields, where they would meet the family coming from church. Adam said, "Take my arm, Dinah," and she took it. That was the only change in their manner to each other since they were last walking together. But

no sadness in the prospect of her going away—in the uncertainty of the issue—could rob the sweetness from Adam's sense that Dinah loved him. He thought he would stay at the Hall Farm all that evening. He would be near her as long as he could.

"Heyday! there's Adam along wi' Dinah," said Mr. Poyser, as he opened the far gate into the Home Close. "I couldna think how he happened away from church. Why," added good Martin, after a moment's pause, "what dost think has just jumped into my head?"

"Summat as hadna far to jump, for it's just under our nose. You mean as Adam's fond o' Dinah."

"Ay! hast ever had any notion of it before?"

"To be sure I have," said Mrs. Poyser, who always declined, if possible, to be taken by surprise. "I'm not one o' those as can see the cat i' the dairy, an' wonder what's she's come after."

"Thee never saidst a word to me about it."

"Well, I aren't like a bird-clapper, forced to make a rattle when the wind blows on me. I can keep my own counsel when there's no good i' speaking."

"But Dinah 'll ha' none o' him; dost think she will?"

"Nay," said Mrs. Poyser, not sufficiently on her guard against a possible surprise; "she'll never marry anybody, if he isn't a Methodist and a cripple."

[*Adam goes to the harvest supper at the Hall Farm, and finds Dinah has already returned to Snowfield. Mrs. Poyser and Bartle Massey have a conversation.*]

"Ay, ay!" said Mrs. Poyser; "one 'ud think, an' hear some folks talk, as the men war 'cute enough to count the corns in a bag o' wheat wi only smelling

at it. They can see through a barn-door, *they* can. Perhaps that's the reason they can see so little o' this side on 't."

Martin Poyser shook with delighted laughter, and winked at Adam, as much as to say the schoolmaster was in for it now.

"Ah!" said Bartle, sneeringly, "the women are quick enough—they're quick enough. They know the rights of a story before they hear it, and can tell a man what his thoughts are before he knows 'em himself."

"Like enough," said Mrs. Poyser; "for the men are mostly so slow, their thoughts overrun 'em, an' they can only catch 'em by the tail. I can count a stocking top while a man's getting 's tongue ready; an' when he outs wi' his speech at last, there's little broth to be made on 't. It's your dead chicks take the longest hatchin'. Howiver, I'm not denying the women are foolish: God Almighty made 'em to match the men."

"Match!" said Bartle; "ay, as vinegar matches one's teeth. If a man says a word, his wife'll match it with a contradiction; if he's a mind for hot meat, his wife 'll match it with cold bacon; if he laughs, she'll match him with whimpering. She's such a match as the horse-fly is to th' horse: she's got the right venom to sting him with—the right venom to sting him with."

"Yes," said Mrs. Poyser, "I know what the men like—a poor soft, as 'ud simper at 'em like the pictur o' the sun, whether they did right or wrong, an' say thank you for a kick, an' pretend she didna' know which end she stood uppermost, till her husband told her. That's what a man wants in a wife, mostly: he wants to make sure o' one fool as 'ull tell him he's

wise. But there's some men can do wi'out that—they think so much o' themselves a'ready ; an' that's how it is there's old bachelors."

" Come, Craig," said Mr. Poyser, jocosely, " you mun get married pretty quick, else you'll be set down for an old bachelor ; an' you see what the women 'ull think on you."

" Well," said Mr. Craig, willing to conciliate Mrs. Poyser, and setting a high value on his own compliments, " *I* like a cleverish woman—a woman o' sperrit—a managing woman."

" You're out there, Craig," said Bartle, dryly ; " you're out there. You judge o' your garden-stuff on a better plan than that : you pick the things for what they can excel in—for what they can excel in. You don't value your peas for their roots, or your carrots for their flowers. Now that's the way you should choose women : their cleverness 'll never come to much—never come to much ; but they make excellent simpletons, ripe and strong-flavoured."

" What dost say to that ? " said Mr. Poyser, throwing himself back and looking merrily at his wife.

" Say ! " answered Mrs. Poyser, with dangerous fire kindling in her eye ; " why, I say as some folks' tongues are like the clocks as run on strikin', not to tell you the time o' the day, but because there's summat wrong i' their own inside——"

[*Adam rides to Snowfield.*]

He walked back till he got nearly to the top of the hill again, and seated himself on a loose stone, against the low wall, to watch till he should see the little black figure leaving the hamlet and winding up the hill. He chose this spot, almost at the top of the

hill, because it was away from all eyes—no house, no cattle, not even a nibbling sheep near—no presence but the still lights and shadows, and the great embracing sky.

She was much longer coming than he expected: he waited an hour at least, watching for her and thinking of her, while the afternoon shadows lengthened, and the light grew softer. At last he saw the little black figure coming from between the gray houses, and gradually approaching the foot of the hill—slowly, Adam thought; but Dinah was really walking at her usual pace, with a light quiet step. Now she was beginning to wind along the path up the hill, but Adam would not move yet: he would not meet her too soon; he had set his heart on meeting her in this assured loneliness. And now he began to fear lest he should startle her too much; "Yet," he thought, "she's not one to be over-startled; she's always so calm and quiet, as if she was prepared for anything."

What was she thinking of as she wound up the hill? Perhaps she had found complete repose without him, and had ceased to feel any need of his love. On the verge of a decision we all tremble: hope pauses with fluttering wings.

But now at last she was very near, and Adam rose from the stone wall. It happened that just as he walked forward, Dinah had paused and turned round to look back at the village: who does not pause and look back in mounting a hill? Adam was glad; for, with the fine instinct of a lover, he felt that it would be best for her to hear his voice before she saw him. He came within three paces of her and then said, "Dinah!" She started without looking round, as if she connected the sound with no place. "Dinah!"

Adam said again. He knew quite well what was in her mind. She was so accustomed to think of impressions as purely spiritual monitions, that she looked for no material visible accompaniment of the voice.

But this second time she looked round. What a look of yearning love it was that the mild gray eyes turned on the strong dark-eyed man! She did not start again at the sight of him; she said nothing, but moved towards him so that his arm could clasp her round.

And they walked on so in silence, while the warm tears fell. Adam was content, and said nothing. It was Dinah who spoke first.

"Adam," she said, "it is the Divine Will. My soul is so knit to yours that it is but a divided life I live without you. And this moment, now you are with me, and I feel that our hearts are filled with the same love, I have a fulness of strength to bear and do our heavenly Father's will, that I had lost before."

Adam paused and looked into her sincere loving eyes.

"Then, we'll never part any more, Dinah, till death parts us."

And they kissed each other with a deep joy.

What greater thing is there for two human souls, than to feel that they are joined for life—to strengthen each other in all labour, to rest on each other in all sorrow, to minister to each other in all pain, to be one with each other in silent unspeakable memories at the moment of the last parting?

[*Adam and Dinah are married, and live happily with their children and with Seth. Lisbeth dies. And Hetty dies as she is on her way home. Arthur Donnithorne returns finally to Hayslope.*]

The Mill on the Floss

[*Mr. Tulliver is the owner of Dorlcote Mill.*]

IT was Easter week, and Mrs. Tulliver's cheese-cakes were more exquisitely light than usual: "a puff o' wind 'ud make 'em blow about like feathers," Kezia the housemaid said—feeling proud to live under a mistress who could make such pastry; so that no season or circumstances could have been more propitious for a family party, even if it had not been advisable to consult sister Glegg and sister Pullet about Tom's going to school.

"I'd as lief not invite sister Deane this time," said Mrs. Tulliver, "for she's as jealous and 'having' as can be, and 's allays trying to make the worst o' my poor children to their aunts and uncles."

"Yes, yes," said Mr. Tulliver, "ask her to come. I never hardly get a bit o' talk with Deane now: we haven't had him this six months. What's it matter what she says?—my children need be beholding to nobody."

"That's what you allays say, Mr. Tulliver; but I'm sure there's nobody o' your side, neither aunt nor uncle, to leave 'em so much as a five-pound note for a leggicy. And there's sister Glegg, and sister Pullet too, saving money unknown—for they put by all their own interest and butter-money too; their husbands buy 'em everything." Mrs. Tulliver was a mild woman, but even a sheep will face about a little when she has lambs.

" Tchuh ! " said Mr. Tulliver. " It takes a big loaf when there's many to breakfast. What signifies your sisters' bits o' money when they've got half a dozen nevvies and nieces to divide it among ? And your sister Deane won't get 'em to leave all to one, I reckon, and make the country cry shame on 'em when they are dead ? "

" I don't know what she won't get 'em to do," said Mrs. Tulliver, " for my children are so awk'ard wi' their aunts and uncles. Maggie's ten times naughtier when they come than she is other days, and Tom doesn't like 'em, bless him—though it's more nat'ral in a boy than a gell. And there's Lucy Deane's such a good child—you may set her on a stool, and there'll she'll sit for an hour together, and never offer to get off. I can't help loving the child as if she was my own ; and I'm sure she's more like *my* child than sister Deane's, for she'd allays a very poor colour for one of our family, sister Deane had."

" Well, well, if you're fond o' the child, ask her father and mother to bring her with 'em. And won't you ask their aunt and uncle Moss too ? and some o' *their* children ? "

" Oh dear, Mr. Tulliver, why, there'd be eight people besides the children, and I must put two more leaves i' the table, besides reaching down more o' the dinner-service ; and you know as well as I do, as *my* sisters and *your* sister don't suit well together."

[*The aunts and uncles come. Mr. and Mrs. Glegg arrive first.*]

" I don't know what ails sister Pullet," she continued. " It used to be the way in our family for one to be as early as another—I'm sure it was so in

my poor father's time—and not for one sister to sit half an hour before the others came. But if the ways o' the family are altered, it shan't be *my* fault—*I'll* never be the one to come into a house when all the rest are going away. I wonder *at* sister Deane—she used to be more like me. But if you'll take my advice, Bessy, you'll put the dinner forrard a bit, sooner than put it back, because folks are late as ought to ha, known better."

"Oh dear, there's no fear but what they'll be all here in time, sister," said Mrs. Tulliver in her mild-peevish tone. "The dinner won't be ready till half-past one. But if it's long for you to wait, let me fetch you a cheese-cake and a glass o' wine."

"Well, Bessy!" said Mrs. Glegg, with a bitter smile, and a scarcely perceptible toss of her head, "I should ha' thought you'd known your own sister better. I never *did* eat between meals, and I'm not going to begin. Not but what I hate that nonsense of having your dinner at half-past one, when you might have it at one. You was never brought up in that way, Bessy."

"Why, Jane, what can I do? Mr. Tulliver doesn't like his dinner before two o'clock, but I put it half an hour earlier because o' you."

"Yes, yes, I know how it is with husbands—they're for putting everything off—they'll put the dinner off till after tea, if they've got wives as are weak enough to give in to such work; but it's a pity for you, Bessy, as you haven't got more strength o' mind. It'll be well if your children don't suffer for it. And I hope you've not gone and got a great dinner for us—going to expense for your sisters, as 'ud sooner eat a crust o' dry bread nor help to ruin you with extravagance. I wonder you don't take pattern by

your sister Deane—she's far more sensible. And here you've got two children to provide for, and your husband's spent your fortin' i' going to law, and's likely to spend his own too. A boiled joint, as you could make broth of for the kitchen," Mrs. Glegg added in a tone of emphatic protest, " and a plain pudding with a spoonful of sugar, and no spice, 'ud be far more becoming."

With sister Glegg in this humour, there was a cheerful prospect for the day. Mrs. Tulliver never went the length of quarrelling with her, any more than a water-fowl that puts out its leg in a deprecating manner can be said to quarrel with a boy who throws stones. But this point of the dinner was a tender one, and not at all new, so that Mrs. Tulliver could make the same answer she had often made before.

" Mr. Tulliver says he always *will* have a good dinner for his friends while he can pay for it," she said ; " and he's a right to do as he likes in his own house, sister."

[*Mr. and Mrs. Pullet arrive, and Mr. and Mrs. Deane and Lucy.*]

Mrs. Tulliver had to look on with a silent pang while Lucy's blonde curls were adjusted. It was quite unaccountable that Mrs. Deane, the thinnest and sallowest of all the Miss Dodsons, should have had this child, who might have been taken for Mrs. Tulliver's any day. And Maggie always looked twice as dark as usual when she was by the side of Lucy.

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" Heyday ! " said Aunt Glegg, with loud emphasis. " Do little boys and gells come into a room without

taking notice o' their uncles and aunts? That wasn't the way when *I* was a little gell."

"Go and speak to your aunts and uncles, my dears," said Mrs. Tulliver, looking anxious and melancholy. She wanted to whisper to Maggie a command to go and have her hair brushed. . . . .

"Well, my dears," said aunt Pullet in a compassionate voice, "you grow wonderful fast. I doubt they'll outgrow their strength," she added, looking over their heads with a melancholy expression at their mother. "I think the gell has too much hair. I'd have it thinned and cut shorter, sister, if I was you: it isn't good for her health. It's that as makes her skin so brown, I shouldn't wonder. Don't you think so, sister Deane?"

"I can't say, I'm sure, sister," said Mrs. Deane, shutting her lips close again, and looking at Maggie with a critical eye.

"No, no," said Mr. Tulliver, "the child's healthy enough—there's nothing ails her. There's red wheat as well as white, for that matter, and some like the dark grain best. But it 'ud be as well if Bessy 'ud have the child's hair cut, so as it 'ud lie smooth."

[*Maggie goes and cuts her hair off in secret.*]

"Oh, Maggie," said Tom, jumping round her, and slapping his knees as he laughed, "oh, my buttons, what a queer thing you look! Look at yourself in the glass—you look like the idiot we throw out nutshells to at school."

Maggie felt an unexpected pang. She had thought beforehand chiefly of her own deliverance from her teasing hair and teasing remarks about it, and something also of the triumph she should have over her

mother and her aunts by this very decided course of action: she didn't want her hair to look pretty—that was out of the question—she only wanted people to think her a clever little girl, and not to find fault with her. But now, when Tom began to laugh at her, and say she was like the idiot, the affair had quite a new aspect. She looked in the glass, and still Tom laughed and clapped his hands, and Maggie's flushed cheeks began to pale, and her lips to tremble a little.

"Oh, Maggie, you'll have to go down to dinner directly," said Tom. "Oh, my!"

"Don't laugh at me, Tom," said Maggie in a passionate tone, with an outburst of angry tears, stamping, and giving him a push.

"Now, then, spitfire!" said Tom. "What did you cut it off for, then? I shall go down: I can smell the dinner going in."

He hurried downstairs and left poor Maggie to that bitter sense of the irrevocable which was almost an everyday experience of her small soul. She could see clearly enough, now the thing was done, that it was very foolish, and that she should have to hear and think more about her hair than ever; for Maggie rushed to her deeds with passionate impulse, and then saw not only their consequences, but what would have happened if they had not been done, with all the detail and exaggerated circumstance of an active imagination.

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Mrs. Tulliver's scream made all eyes turn towards the same point as her own, and Maggie's cheeks and ears began to burn, while uncle Glegg, a kind-looking, white-haired old gentleman, said—

"Heyday! what little gell's this?—why, I don't

know her. Is it some little gell you've picked up in the road, Kezia ? "

" Why, she's gone and cut her hair herself," said Mr. Tulliver in an undertone to Mr. Deane, laughing with much enjoyment. " Did you ever know such a little hussy as it is ? "

" Why, little miss, you've made yourself look very funny," said uncle Pullet, and perhaps he never in his life made an observation which was felt to be so lacerating.

" Fie, for shame ! " said aunt Glegg, in her loudest, severest tone of reproof. " Little gells as cut their own hair should be whipped and fed on bread and water—not come and sit down with their aunts and uncles."

" Ay, ay," said uncle Glegg, meaning to give a playful turn to this denunciation, " she must be sent to jail, I think, and they'll cut the rest of her hair off there, and make it all even."

" She's more like a gipsy nor iver," said aunt Pullet in a pitying tone ; " it's very bad luck, sister, as the gell should be so brown—the boy's fair enough. I doubt it'll stand in her way in life to be so brown."

" She's a naughty child, as'll break her mother's heart," said Mrs. Tulliver, with the tears in her eyes.

Maggie seemed to be listening to a chorus of reproach and derision. Her first flush came from anger, which gave her a transient power of defiance, and Tom thought she was braving it out, supported by the recent appearance of the pudding and custard. Under this impression, he whispered, " Oh, my ! Maggie, I told you you'd catch it." He meant to be friendly, but Maggie felt convinced that Tom was rejoicing in her ignominy. Her feeble power of defiance left her in an instant, her heart swelled, and, getting up

from her chair, she ran to her father, hid her face on his shoulder, and burst out into loud sobbing.

"Come, come, my wench," said her father soothingly, putting his arm round her, "niver mind; you was i' the right to cut it off if it plagued you; give over crying: father'll take your part."

Delicious words of tenderness! Maggie never forgot any of these moments when her father "took her part"; she kept them in her heart, and thought of them long years after, when every one else said that her father had done very ill by his children.

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"Mr. Tulliver," she said, interrupting her husband in his talk with Mr. Deane, "it's time now to tell the children's aunts and uncles what you're thinking of doing with Tom, isn't it?"

"Very well," said Mr. Tulliver rather sharply, "I've no objections to tell anybody what I mean to do with him. I've settled," he added, looking towards Mr. Glegg and Mr. Deane, "I've settled to send him to a Mr. Stelling, a parson, down at King's Lorton, there—an uncommon clever fellow, I understand—as'll put him up to most things." . . . .

Uncle Pullet . . . was the first to give utterance to his astonishment.

"Why, what can you be going to send him to a parson for?" he said, with an amazed twinkling in his eyes, looking at Mr. Glegg and Mr. Deane, to see if they showed any signs of comprehension. . . .

"What! do you think the parson'll teach him to know a good sample o' wheat when he sees it, neighbour Tulliver?" said Mr. Glegg, who was fond of his jest; and, having retired from business, felt that it

was not only allowable but becoming in him to take a playful view of things.

"Why, you see, I've got a plan i' my head about Tom," said Mr. Tulliver, pausing after that statement and lifting up his glass.

"Well, if I may be allowed to speak, and it's seldom as I am," said Mrs. Glegg, with a tone of bitter meaning, "I should like to know what good is to come to the boy, by bringin' him up above his fortin."

"Why," said Mr. Tulliver, not looking at Mrs. Glegg, but at the male part of his audience, "you see, I've made up my mind not to bring Tom up to my own business. I've had my thoughts about it all along, and I made up my mind by what I saw with Garnett and *his* son. I mean to put him to some business, as he can go into without capital, and I want to give him an eddication as he'll be even wi' the lawyers and folks, and put me up to a notion now an' then."

Mrs. Glegg emitted a long sort of guttural sound with closed lips, that smiled in mingled pity and scorn.

"It 'ud be a fine deal better for some people," she said, after that introductory note, "if they'd let the lawyers alone."

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"Mr. Glegg, I wonder *at* you," said his wife. "It's very unbecoming in a man o' your age and belongings."

"What's unbecoming, Mrs. G.?" said Mr. Glegg, winking pleasantly at the company. "My new blue coat as I've got on?"

"I pity your weakness, Mr. Glegg. I say it's unbecoming to be making a joke when you see your own kin going headlongs to ruin."

"If you mean me by that," said Mr. Tulliver, considerably nettled, "you needn't trouble yourself to fret about me. I can manage my own affairs without troubling other folks."

"Bless me!" said Mr. Deane, judiciously introducing a new idea, "why, now I come to think of it, somebody said Wakem was going to send *his* son—the deformed lad—to a clergyman—didn't they, Susan?" (appealing to his wife).

"I can give no account of it, I'm sure," said Mrs. Deane, closing her lips very tightly again. Mrs. Deane was not a woman to take part in a scene where missiles were flying.

"Well," said Mr. Tulliver, speaking all the more cheerfully, that Mrs. Glegg might see he didn't mind her, "if Wakem thinks o' sending his son to a clergyman, depend on it I shall make no mistake i' sending Tom to one. Wakem's as big a scoundrel as Old Harry ever made, but he knows the length of every man's foot he's got to deal with. Ay, ay, tell me who's Wakem's butcher, and I'll tell you where to get your meat."

"But lawyer Wakem's son's got a hump-back," said Mrs. Pullet, who felt as if the whole business had a funereal aspect; "it's more nat'ral to send *him* to a clergyman."

"Yes," said Mr. Glegg, interpreting Mrs. Pullet's observations with erroneous plausibility, "you must consider that, neighbour Tulliver; Wakem's son isn't likely to follow any business. Wakem'll make a gentleman of him, poor fellow."

"Mr. Glegg," said Mrs. G., in a tone which implied that her indignation would fizz and ooze a little, though she was determined to keep it corked up, "you'd far better hold your tongue. Mr. Tulliver

doesn't want to know your opinion nor mine neither. There's folks in the world as know better than everybody else."

"Why, I should think that's you, if we're to trust your own tale," said Mr. Tulliver, beginning to boil up again.

"Oh, *I* say nothing," said Mrs. Glegg sarcastically. "My advice has never been asked, and I don't give it."

"It'll be the first time, then," said Mr. Tulliver. "It's the only thing you're over-ready at giving."

"I've been over-ready at lending, then, if I haven't been over-ready at giving," said Mrs. Glegg. "There's folks I've lent money to, as perhaps I shall repent o' lending money to kin."

"Come, come, come," said Mr. Glegg soothingly. But Mr. Tulliver was not to be hindered of his retort.

"You've got a bond for it, I reckon," he said; "and you've had your five per cent., kin or no kin."

"Sister," said Mrs. Tulliver pleadingly, "drink your wine, and let me give you some almonds and raisins."

"Bessy, I'm sorry for you," said Mrs. Glegg, very much with the feeling of a cur that seizes the opportunity of diverting his back towards the man who carries no stick. "It's poor work talking o' almonds and raisins."

"Lors, sister Glegg, don't be so quarrelsome," said Mrs. Pullet, beginning to cry a little. "You may be struck with a fit, getting so red in the face after dinner, and we are but just out o' mourning, all of us—and all wi' gowns craped alike and just put by—it's very bad among sisters."

"I should think it *is* bad," said Mrs. Glegg. "Things are come to a fine pass when one sister

invites the other to her house o' purpose to quarrel with her and abuse her."

"Softly, softly, Jane—be reasonable—be reasonable," said Mr. Glegg.

But while he was speaking, Mr. Tulliver, who had by no means said enough to satisfy his anger, burst out again—

"Who wants to quarrel with you?" he said. "It's you as can't let people alone, but must be gnawing at 'em for iver. *I* should niver want to quarrel with any woman if she kept her place."

"My place, indeed!" said Mrs. Glegg, getting rather more shrill. "There's your betters, Mr. Tulliver, as are dead and in their grave, treated me with a different sort of respect to what you do—*though* I've got a husband as'll sit by and see me abused by them as 'ud never ha' had the chance if there hadn't been them in our family as married worse than they might ha' done."

"If you talk o' that," said Mr. Tulliver, "my family's as good as yours—and better, for it hasn't got a damned ill-tempered woman in it."

"Well," said Mrs. Glegg, rising from her chair, "I don't know whether you think it's a fine thing to sit by and hear me swore at, Mr. Glegg; but I'm not going to stay a minute longer in this house. You can stay behind, and come home with the gig—and I'll walk home."

"Dear heart, dear heart!" said Mr. Glegg in a melancholy tone, as he followed his wife out of the room.

"Mr. Tulliver, how could you talk so?" said Mrs. Tulliver, with the tears in her eyes.

"Let her go," said Mr. Tulliver, too hot to be damped by any amount of tears. "Let her go, and the

sooner the better: she won't be trying to domineer over *me* again in a hurry."

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"Suppose sister Glegg should call her money in—it 'ud be very awkward for you to have to raise five hundred pounds now," said Mrs. Tulliver to her husband that evening, as she took a plaintive review of the day.

Mrs. Tulliver had lived thirteen years with her husband, yet she retained in all the freshness of her early married life a facility of saying things which drove him in the opposite direction to the one she desired. . . .

This observation of hers tended directly to convince Mr. Tulliver that it would not be at all awkward for him to raise five hundred pounds; and when Mrs. Tulliver became rather pressing to know *how* he would raise it without mortgaging the mill and the house, which he had said he never *would* mortgage, since nowadays people were none so ready to lend money without security, Mr. Tulliver, getting warm, declared that Mrs. Glegg might do as she liked about calling in her money—he should pay it in, whether or not.

[*Mr. Tulliver goes to see his sister, Mrs. Moss, to recover three hundred pounds he has lent her.*]

Lizzy, a black-eyed child of seven, looked very shy when her mother drew her forward, for the small Mosses were much in awe of their uncle from Dorlcote Mill. She was inferior enough to Maggie in fire and strength of expression, to make the resemblance

between the two entirely flattering to Mr. Tulliver's fatherly love.

"Ay, they're a bit alike," he said, looking kindly at the little figure in the soiled pinafore. "They both take after our mother. You've got enough o' gells, Gritty," he added in a tone half compassionate, half reproachful.

"Four of 'em, bless 'em," said Mrs. Moss, with a sigh, stroking Lizzy's hair on each side of her forehead; "as many as there's boys. They've got a brother apiece."

"Ah, but they must turn out and fend for themselves," said Mr. Tulliver, feeling that his severity was relaxing, and trying to brace it by throwing out a wholesome hint. "They mustn't look to hanging on their brothers."

"No: but I hope their brothers 'ull love the poor things, and remember they came o' one father and mother: the lads 'ull never be the poorer for that," said Mrs. Moss, flashing out with hurried timidity, like a half-smothered fire.

Mr. Tulliver gave his horse a little stroke on the flank, then checked it, and said angrily, "Stand still with you!" much to the astonishment of that innocent animal.

"And the more there is of 'em, the more they must love one another," Mrs. Moss went on, looking at her children with a didactic purpose. But she turned towards her brother again to say, "Not but what I hope your boy 'ull allays be good to his sister, though there's but two of 'em, like you and me, brother."

That arrow went straight to Mr. Tulliver's heart. He had not a rapid imagination, but the thought of Maggie was very near to him, and he was not long in

seeing his relation to his own sister side by side with Tom's relation to Maggie. Would the little wench ever be poorly off, and Tom rather hard upon her?

"Ay, ay, Gritty," said the miller with a new softness in his tone; "but I've allays done what I could for you," he added, as if vindicating himself from a reproach.

"I'm not denying that, brother, and I'm noways ungrateful," said poor Mrs. Moss, too fagged by toil and children to have strength left for any pride. "But here's the father. What a while you've been, Moss!"

"While, do you call it?" said Mr. Moss, feeling out of breath and injured. "I've been running all the way. Won't you 'light, Mr. Tulliver?"

"Well, I'll just get down and have a bit o' talk with you in the garden," said Mr. Tulliver, thinking that he should be more likely to show a due spirit of resolve if his sister were not present.

[*He asks for the money and rides away. And then he thinks of Tom and Maggie, and turns back.*]

Mr. Tulliver's return into the yard was descried by several young Mosses, who immediately ran in with the exciting news to their mother, so that Mrs. Moss was again on the doorstep when her brother rode up. She had been crying, but was rocking baby to sleep in her arms now, and made no ostentatious show of sorrow as her brother looked at her, but merely said—

"The father's gone to the field again, if you want him, brother."

"No, Gritty, no," said Mr. Tulliver in a gentle tone. "Don't you fret—that's all—I'll make a shift without

the money a bit—only you must be as clever and contriving as you can."

Mrs. Moss's tears came again at this unexpected kindness, and she could say nothing.

"Come, come!—the little wench shall come and see you. I'll bring her and Tom some day before he goes to school. You mustn't fret . . . I'll allays be a good brother to you."

"Thank you for that word, brother," said Mrs. Moss, drying her tears. . . .

[*Mrs. Tulliver and the children go to tea at Garum Firs, the home of the Pullets.*]

"Mrs. Gray has sent home my new bonnet, Bessy," said Mrs. Pullet in a pathetic tone, as Mrs. Tulliver adjusted her cap.

"Has she, sister?" said Mrs. Tulliver with an air of much interest. "And how do you like it?"

"It's apt to make a mess with clothes, takin' 'em out and putting 'em in again," said Mrs. Pullet, drawing a bunch of keys from her pocket and looking at them earnestly, "but it 'ud be a pity for you to go away without seeing it. There's no knowing what may happen."

Mrs. Pullet shook her head slowly at this last serious consideration, which determined her to single out a particular key.

"I'm afraid it'll be troublesome to you getting it out, sister," said Mrs. Tulliver, "but I *should* like to see what sort of a crown she's made you."

Mrs. Pullet rose with a melancholy air, and unlocked one wing of a very bright wardrobe, where you may have hastily supposed she would find the new bonnet. Not at all. Such a supposition could only have arisen

from a too superficial acquaintance with the habits of the Dodson family. In this wardrobe Mrs. Pullet was seeking something small enough to be hidden among layers of linen—it was a door-key.

"You must come with me into the best-room," said Mrs. Pullet.

"May the children come too, sister?" inquired Mrs. Tulliver, who saw that Maggie and Lucy were looking rather eager.

"Well," said aunt Pullet reflectively, "it'll perhaps be safer for 'em to come—they'll be touching something if we leave 'em behind."

So they went in procession along the bright and slippery corridor, dimly lighted by the semi-lunar top of the window which rose above the closed shutter: it was really quite solemn. Aunt Pullet paused and unlocked a door which opened on something still more solemn than the passage: a darkened room, in which the outer light, entering feebly, showed what looked like the corpses of furniture in white shrouds. Everything that was not shrouded stood with its legs upwards. Lucy laid hold of Maggie's frock, and Maggie's heart beat rapidly.

Aunt Pullet half opened the shutter and then unlocked the wardrobe, with a melancholy deliberateness which was quite in keeping with the funereal solemnity of the scene. The delicious scent of rose-leaves that issued from the wardrobe made the process of taking out sheet after sheet of silver paper quite pleasant to assist at, though the sight of the bonnet at last was an anticlimax to Maggie, who would have preferred something more strikingly preternatural. But few things could have been more impressive to Mrs. Tulliver. She looked all round it in silence for some moments, and then said emphatically, "Well,

sister, I'll never speak against the full crowns again ! "

It was a great concession, and Mrs. Pullet felt it : she felt something was due to it.

" You'd like to see it on, sister ? " she said sadly. " I'll open the shutter a bit farther."

" Well, if you don't mind taking off your cap, sister," said Mrs. Tulliver.

Mrs. Pullet took off her cap, displaying the brown silk scalp with a jutting promontory of curls which was common to the more mature and judicious women of those times, and, placing the bonnet on her head, turned slowly round, like a draper's lay-figure, that Mrs. Tulliver might miss no point of view.

" I've sometimes thought there's a loop too much o' ribbon on this left side, sister ; what do you think ? " said Mrs. Pullet.

Mrs. Tulliver looked earnestly at the point indicated, and turned her head on one side. " Well, I think it's best as it is ; if you meddled with it, sister, you might repent."

" That's true," said aunt Pullet, taking off the bonnet and looking at it contemplatively.

" How much might she charge you for that bonnet, sister ? " said Mrs. Tulliver, whose mind was actively engaged on the possibility of getting a humble imitation of this *chef-d'œuvre* made from a piece of silk she had at home.

Mrs. Pullet screwed up her mouth and shook her head, and then whispered, " Pullet pays for it ; he said I was to have the best bonnet at Garum Church, let the next best be whose it would."

She began slowly to adjust the trimmings, in preparation for returning it to its place in the wardrobe, and her thoughts seemed to have taken a melancholy turn, for she shook her head.

" Ah," she said at last, " I may never wear it twice, sister ; who knows ? "

" Don't talk o' that, sister," answered Mrs. Tulliver. " I hope you'll have your health this summer."

" Ah ! but there may come a death in the family, as there did soon after I had my green satin bonnet. Cousin Abbot may go, and we can't think o' wearing crape less nor half a year for him."

" That *would* be unlucky," said Mrs. Tulliver, entering thoroughly into the possibility of an inopportune decease. " There's never so much pleasure i' wearing a bonnet the second year, especially when the crowns are so chancy—never two summers alike."

* * * * * *

When they went down, uncle Pullet observed with some acumen, that he reckoned the missis had been showing her bonnet—that was what had made them so long upstairs. With Tom the interval had seemed still longer, for he had been seated in irksome constraint on the edge of a sofa directly opposite his uncle Pullet, who regarded him with twinkling gray eyes, and occasionally addressed him as " Young sir."

" Well, young sir, what do you learn at school ? " was a standing question with uncle Pullet ; whereupon Tom always looked sheepish, rubbed his hands across his face and answered, " I don't know." It was altogether so embarrassing to be seated *tête-à-tête* with uncle Pullet, that Tom could not even look at the prints on the walls, or the fly-cages, or the wonderful flower-pots ; he saw nothing but his uncle's gaiters.

[*Mr. and Mrs. Glegg at home.*]

There was one evening-cloud which had always disappeared from Mrs. Glegg's brow when she sat at the breakfast-table: it was her fuzzy front of curls; for as she occupied herself in household matters in the morning, it would have been a mere extravagance to put on anything so superfluous to the making of leathery pastry as a fuzzy curled front. By half-past ten, decorum demanded the front: until then Mrs. Glegg could economise it, and society would never be any the wiser. But the absence of that cloud only left it more apparent that the cloud of severity remained; and Mr. Glegg, perceiving this, as he sat down to his milk-porridge, which it was his old frugal habit to stem his morning hunger with, prudently resolved to leave the first remark to Mrs. Glegg, lest, to so delicate an article as a lady's temper, the slightest touch should do mischief. People who seem to enjoy their ill-temper have a way of keeping it in fine condition by inflicting privations on themselves. That was Mrs. Glegg's way: she made her tea weaker than usual this morning, and declined butter. It was a hard case that a vigorous mood for quarrelling, so highly capable of using any opportunity, should not meet with a single remark from Mr. Glegg on which to exercise itself. But by and by it appeared that his silence would answer the purpose, for he heard himself apostrophised at last in that tone peculiar to the wife of one's bosom.

"Well, Mr. Glegg! it's a poor return I get for making you the wife I've made you all these years. If this is the way I'm to be treated, I'd better ha' known it before my poor father died, and then, when

I'd wanted a home, I should ha' gone elsewhere—as the choice was offered me."

Mr. Glegg paused from his porridge and looked up —not with any new amazement, but simply with that quiet, habitual wonder with which we regard constant mysteries.

"Why, Mrs. G., what have I done now?"

"Done now, Mr. Glegg? *done now?* . . . I'm sorry for you."

Not seeing his way to any pertinent answer, Mr. Glegg reverted to his porridge.

"There's husbands in the world," continued Mrs. Glegg after a pause, "as 'ud have known how to do something different to siding with everybody else against their own wives. Perhaps I'm wrong, and you can teach me better. But I've allays heard as it's the husband's place to stand by the wife, instead o' rejoicing and triumphing when folks insult her."

"Now, what call have you to say that?" said Mr. Glegg rather warmly, for though a kind man, he was not as meek as Moses. "When did I rejoice or triumph over you?"

"There's ways o' doing things worse than speaking out plain, Mr. Glegg. I'd sooner you'd tell me to my face as you make light of me, than try to make out as everybody's in the right but me, and come to your breakfast in the morning, as I've hardly slept an hour this night, and sulk at me as if I was the dirt under your feet."

"Sulk at you?" said Mr. Glegg in a tone of angry facetiousness. "You're like a tipsy man as thinks everybody's had too much but himself."

"Don't lower yourself with using coarse language to *me*, Mr. Glegg! It makes you look very small, though you can't see yourself," said Mrs. Glegg in a

tone of energetic compassion. "A man in your place should set an example, and talk more sensible."

"Yes; but will you listen to sense?" retorted Mr. Glegg sharply. "The best sense I can talk to you is what I said last night—as you're i' the wrong to think o' calling in your money, when it's safe enough if you'd let it alone, all because of a bit of a tiff, and I was in hopes you'd ha' altered your mind this morning. But if you'd like to call it in, don't do it in a hurry now, and breed more enmity in the family—but wait till there's a pretty mortgage to be had without any trouble. You'd have to set the lawyer to work now to find an investment, and make no end o' expense."

Mrs. Glegg felt there was really something in this, but she tossed her head, and emitted a guttural interjection to indicate that her silence was only an armistice, not a peace. And, in fact, hostilities soon broke out again.

"I'll thank you for my cup o' tea, now, Mrs. G.," said Mr. Glegg, seeing that she did not proceed to give it him as usual, when he had finished his porridge. She lifted the teapot with a slight toss of the head, and said—

"I'm glad to hear you'll *thank* me, Mr. Glegg. It's little thanks *I* get for what I do for folks i' this world. Though there's never a woman o' *your* side o' the family, Mr. Glegg, as is fit to stand up with me, and I'd say it if I was on my dying bed. Not but what I've allays conducted myself civil to your kin, and there isn't one of 'em can say the contrary, though my equils they aren't, and nobody shall make me say it."

"You'd better leave finding fault wi' my kin till you've left off quarrelling with your own, Mrs. G.,"

said Mr. Glegg with angry sarcasm. "I'll trouble you for the milk-jug."

"That's as false a word as ever you spoke, Mr. Glegg," said the lady, pouring out the milk with unusual profuseness, as much as to say, if he wanted milk he should have it with a vengeance. "And you know it's false. I'm not the woman to quarrel with my own kin: *you* may, for I've known you do it."

"Why, what did you call it yesterday, then, leaving your sister's house in a tantrum?"

"I'd no quarrel wi' my sister, Mr. Glegg, and it's false to say it. Mr. Tulliver's none o' my blood, and it was him quarrelled with me, and drove me out o' the house. But perhaps you'd have had me stay and be swore at, Mr. Glegg; perhaps you was vexed not to hear more abuse and foul language poured out upo' your own wife. But, let me tell you, it's *your* disgrace."

"Did ever anybody hear the like i' this parish?" said Mr. Glegg, getting hot. "A woman, with everything provided for her, and allowed to keep her own money the same as if it was settled on her, and with a gig stuffed and lined at no end o' expense, and provided for when I die beyond anything she could expect . . . to go on i' this way, biting and snapping like a mad dog! It's beyond everything, as God A'mighty should ha' made women *so*." (These last words were uttered in a tone of sorrowful agitation. Mr. Glegg pushed his tea from him, and tapped the table with both his hands.)

"Well, Mr. Glegg, if those are your feelings, it's best they should be known," said Mrs. Glegg, taking off her napkin, and folding it in an excited manner. "But if you talk o' my being provided for beyond what I could expect, I beg leave to tell you as I'd a

right to expect a many things as I don't find. And as to my being like a mad dog, it's well if you're not cried shame on by the county for your treatment of me, for it's what I can't bear, and I won't bear——"

Here Mrs. Glegg's voice intimated that she was going to cry, and, breaking off from speech, she rang the bell violently.

"Sally," she said, rising from her chair, and speaking in rather a choked voice, "light a fire upstairs, and put the blinds down. Mr. Glegg, you'll please to order what you'd like for dinner. I shall have gruel."

Mrs. Glegg walked across the room to the small book-case, and took down Baxter's *Saints' Everlasting Rest*, which she carried with her upstairs. It was the book she was accustomed to lay open before her on special occasions: on wet Sunday mornings, or when she heard of a death in the family, or when, as in this case, her quarrel with Mr. Glegg had been set an octave higher than usual.

[*But Mrs. Glegg has really been mollified by Mr. Glegg's reference to the provision he has made for her.*]

Mr. and Mrs. Glegg talked quite amicably about the Tullivers that evening. Mr. Glegg went the length of admitting that Tulliver was a sad man for getting into hot water, and was like enough to run through his property; and Mrs. Glegg, meeting this acknowledgment half-way, declared that it was beneath her to take notice of such a man's conduct, and that, for her sister's sake, she would let him keep the five hundred a while longer, for when she put it out on a mortgage she should only get four per cent.

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Mrs. Glegg being in this state of satisfaction in her own lofty magnanimity, I leave you to judge what effect was produced on her by the reception of a short letter from Mr. Tulliver, that very evening, after Mrs. Pullet's departure, informing her that she needn't trouble her mind about her five hundred pounds, for it should be paid back to her in the course of the next month at furthest, together with the interest due thereon until the time of payment. And furthermore, that Mr. Tulliver had no wish to behave uncivilly to Mrs. Glegg, and she was welcome to his house whenever she liked to come, but he desired no favours from her, either for himself or his children.

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Mr. Tulliver's prompt procedure entailed on him further promptitude in finding the convenient person who was desirous of lending five hundred pounds on bond. "It must be no client of Wakem's," he said to himself; and yet at the end of a fortnight it turned out to the contrary; not because Mr. Tulliver's will was feeble, but because external fact was stronger. Wakem's client was the only convenient person to be found.

[*Tom has been to Mr. Stelling's, and comes home to a rather gloomy Christmas.*]

The particular embodiment of the evil principle now exciting Mr. Tulliver's determined resistance was Mr. Pivart, who, having lands higher up the Ripple, was taking measures for their irrigation, which either were, or would be, or were bound to be (on the principle that water was water), an infringement on Mr. Tulliver's legitimate share of water-power.

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"You won't be forced to go to law with him, I hope, brother?" said Mrs. Moss with some anxiety.

"I don't know what I shall be forced to; but I know what I shall force *him* to, with his dykes and erigations, if there's any law to be brought to bear o' the right side. I know well enough who's at the bottom of it; he's got Wakem to back him and egg him on. I know Wakem tells him the law can't touch him for it, but there's folks can handle the law besides Wakem. It takes a big raskil to beat him; but there's bigger to be found, as know more o' th' ins and outs o' the law, else how came Wakem to lose Brumley's suit for him?"

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"Father," said Tom, one evening near the end of the holidays, "uncle Glegg says Lawyer Wakem *is* going to send his son to Mr. Stelling. It isn't true—what they said about his going to be sent to France. You won't like me to go to school with Wakem's son, shall you?"

"It's no matter for that, my boy," said Mr. Tulliver; "don't you learn anything bad of him, that's all. The lad's a poor deformed creatur, and takes after his mother in the face: I think there isn't much of his father in him. It's a sign Wakem thinks high o' Mr. Stelling, as he sends his son to him, and Wakem knows meal from bran."

[*Philip Wakem joins Tom at school.*]

But he was not always in a good humour or happy mood. The slight spurt of peevish susceptibility which had escaped him in their first interview, was a

symptom of a perpetually recurring mental ailment —half of it nervous irritability, half of it the heart-bitterness produced by the sense of his deformity. In these fits of susceptibility every glance seemed to him to be charged either with offensive pity or with ill-repressed disgust—at the very least it was an indifferent glance, and Philip felt indifference as a child of the South feels the chill air of a Northern spring. Poor Tom's blundering patronage when they were out of doors together would sometimes make him turn upon the well-meaning lad quite savagely ; and his eyes, usually sad and quiet, would flash with anything but playful lightning. No wonder Tom retained his suspicions of the humpback.

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Tom ran in to Philip, who was enjoying his afternoon's holiday at the piano, in the drawing-room, picking out tunes for himself and singing them. He was supremely happy, perched like an amorphous bundle on the high stool, with his head thrown back, his eyes fixed on the opposite cornice, and his lips wide open, sending forth, with all his might, impromptu syllables to a tune of Arne's, which had hit his fancy.

" Come, Philip," said Tom, bursting in ; " don't stay roaring ' la, la ' there—come and see old Poulter do his sword-exercise in the carriage-house ! "

The jar of this interruption—the discord of Tom's tones coming across the notes to which Philip was vibrating in soul and body, would have been enough to unhinge his temper, even if there had been no question of Poulter the drilling-master ; and Tom, in the hurry of seizing something to say to prevent Mr. Poulter from thinking he was afraid of the sword when he sprang away from it, had alighted on this

proposition to fetch Philip—though he knew well enough that Philip hated to hear him mention his drilling-lessons. Tom would never have done so inconsiderate a thing except under the severe stress of his personal pride.

Philip shuddered visibly as he paused from his music. Then turning red, he said, with violent passion—

"Get away, you lumbering idiot! Don't come bellowing at me—you're not fit to speak to anything but a cart-horse!"

It was not the first time Philip had been made angry by him, but Tom had never before been assailed with verbal missiles that he understood so well.

"I'm fit to speak to something better than you—you poor-spirited imp!" said Tom, lighting up immediately at Philip's fire. "You know I won't hit you, because you're no better than a girl But, I'm an honest man's son, and *your* father's a rogue—everybody says so!"

[*Maggie pays a visit to the school.*]

When Maggie came, however, she could not help looking with growing interest at the new schoolfellow, although he was the son of that wicked Lawyer Wakem, who made her father so angry. She had arrived in the middle of school-hours, and had sat by while Philip went through his lessons with Mr. Stelling. Tom, some weeks ago, had sent her word that Philip knew no end of stories—not stupid stories like hers; and she was convinced now from her own observation that he must be very clever: she hoped he would think *her* rather clever too, when she came to talk to him. Maggie, moreover, had rather a tenderness for

deformed things ; she preferred the wry-necked lambs, because it seemed to her that the lambs which were quite strong and well-made wouldn't mind so much about being petted ; and she was especially fond of petting objects that would think it very delightful to be petted by her. She loved Tom very dearly, but she often wished that he *cared* more about her loving him.

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" Maggie," said Philip, after a minute or two, still leaning on his elbow and looking at her, " if you had had a brother like me, do you think you should have loved him as well as Tom ? "

Maggie started a little on being roused from her reverie, and said, " What ? " Philip repeated his question.

" Oh yes, better," she answered immediately. " No, not better ; because I don't think I *could* love you better than Tom. But I should be so sorry—*so sorry* for you."

Philip coloured : he had meant to imply, would she love him as well in spite of his deformity, and yet when she alluded to it so plainly, he winced under her pity. Maggie, young as she was, felt her mistake. Hitherto she had instinctively behaved as if she were quite unconscious of Philip's deformity : her own keen sensitiveness and experience under family criticism sufficed to teach her this as well as if she had been directed by the most finished breeding.

" But you are so very clever, Philip, and you can play and sing," she added quickly. " I wish you *were* my brother. I'm very fond of you. And you would stay at home with me when Tom went out, and you would teach me everything—wouldn't you ?' Greek and everything ? "

"But you'll go away soon, and go to school, Maggie," said Philip, "and then you'll forget all about me, and not care for me any more. And then I shall see you when you're grown up, and you'll hardly take any notice of me."

"Oh no, I shan't forget you, I'm sure," said Maggie, shaking her head very seriously. "I never forget anything, and I think about everybody when I'm away from them. I think about poor Yap—he's got a lump in his throat, and Luke says he'll die. Only don't you tell Tom, because it will vex him so. You never saw Yap: he's a queer little dog—nobody cares about him but Tom and me."

"Do you care as much about me as you do about Yap, Maggie?" said Philip, smiling rather sadly.

"Oh yes, I should think so," said Maggie, laughing.

"I'm very fond of *you*, Maggie; I shall never forget *you*," said Philip, "and when I'm very unhappy, I shall always think of you, and wish I had a sister with dark eyes, just like yours."

"Why do you like my eyes?" said Maggie, well pleased. She had never heard any one but her father speak of her eyes as if they had merit.

"I don't know," said Philip. "They're not like any other eyes. They seem trying to speak—trying to speak kindly. I don't like other people to look at me much, but I like you to look at me, Maggie."

"Why, I think you're fonder of me than Tom is," said Maggie rather sorrowfully. Then, wondering how she could convince Philip that she could like him just as well, although he was crooked, she said—

"Should you like me to kiss you, as I do Tom? I will, if you like."

"Yes, very much: nobody kisses me."

Maggie put her arm round his neck and kissed him quite earnestly.

"There now," she said, "I shall always remember you, and kiss you when I see you again, if it's ever so long." . . .

* * * * *

So Tom went on even to the fifth half-year—till he was turned sixteen—at King's Lorton, while Maggie was growing with a rapidity which her aunts considered highly reprehensible, at Miss Furniss's boarding-school in the ancient town of Laceham on the Floss, with cousin Lucy for her companion. In her early letters to Tom she had always sent her love to Philip, and asked many questions about him, which were answered by brief sentences about Tom's toothache, and a turf-house which he was helping to build in the garden, with other items of that kind. She was pained to hear Tom say in the holidays that Philip was as queer as ever again, and often cross: they were no longer very good friends, she perceived; and when she reminded Tom that he ought always to love Philip for being so good to him when his foot was bad, he answered, "Well, it isn't my fault: *I* don't do anything to him." She hardly ever saw Philip during the remainder of their school-life; in the Midsummer holidays he was always away at the seaside, and at Christmas she could only meet him at long intervals in the streets of St. Ogg's.

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But when their father was actually engaged in the long-threatened lawsuit, and Wakem, as the agent at once of Pivart and Old Harry, was acting against him, even Maggie felt, with some sadness, that they

were not likely ever to have any intimacy with Philip again: the very name of Wakem made her father angry, and she had once heard him say, that if that crook-backed son lived to inherit his father's ill-gotten gains, there would be a curse upon him.

[*Maggie arrives unexpectedly at the school during Tom's last quarter there. Philip has already left.*]

"Isn't my father well?" said Tom rather anxiously.

"Not quite," said Maggie. "He's very unhappy, Tom. The lawsuit is ended, and I came to tell you because I thought it would be better for you to know it before you came home, and I didn't like only to send you a letter."

"My father hasn't lost?" said Tom hastily, springing from the sofa, and standing before Maggie with his hands suddenly thrust in his pockets.

"Yes, dear Tom," said Maggie, looking up at him with trembling. . . . "Oh, Tom, he will lose the mill and the land and everything; he will have nothing left."

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Maggie's lips grew whiter, and she began to tremble almost as Tom had done. The two poor things clung closer to each other—both trembling—the one at an unshapen fear, the other at the image of a terrible certainty. When Maggie spoke, it was hardly above a whisper.

"And . . . and . . . poor father——"

Maggie could not utter it. But the suspense was intolerable to Tom. A vague idea of going to prison, as a consequence of debt, was the shape his fears had begun to take.

"Where's my father?" he said impatiently. "*Tell* me, Maggie."

"He's at home," said Maggie, finding it easier to reply to that question. "But," she added, after a pause, "not himself. . . . He fell off his horse. . . . He has known nobody but me ever since. . . . He seems to have lost his senses. . . . Oh, father, father——"

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Sitting on the coach on their way home, the brother and sister talked to each other in sad, interrupted whispers.

"They say Mr. Wakem has got a mortgage or something on the land, Tom," said Maggie. "It was the letter with that news in it that made father ill, they think."

"I believe that scoundrel's been planning all along to ruin my father," said Tom, leaping from the vaguest impressions to a definite conclusion. "I'll make him feel for it when I'm a man. Mind you never speak to Philip again."

"Oh, Tom!" said Maggie, in a tone of sad remonstrance; but she had no spirit to dispute anything then, still less to vex Tom by opposing him.

[*They find a bailiff in the house, and Mrs. Tulliver lamenting over her properties. Tom says:*]

"But will my aunts let them be sold, mother? Do they know about it? They'll never let your linen go, will they? Haven't you sent to them?"

"Yes, I sent Luke directly they'd put the bailies in, and your aunt Pullet's been—and, oh dear, oh dear, she cries so, and says your father's disgraced my family and made it the talk o' the country; and

she'll buy the spotted cloths for herself, because she's niver had so many as she wanted o' that pattern, and they shan't go to strangers, but she's got more checks a'ready nor she can do with." (Here Mrs. Tulliver began to lay back the table-cloths in the chest, folding and stroking them automatically.) "And your uncle Glegg's been too, and he says things must be bought in for us to lie down on, but he must talk to your aunt; and they're all coming to consult. . . . But I know they'll none of 'em take my chany," she added, turning towards the cups and saucers—"for they all found fault with 'em when I bought 'em, 'cause o' the small gold sprig all over 'em, between the flowers. But there's none of 'em got better chany, not even your aunt Pullet herself—and I bought it wi' my own money as I'd saved iver since I was turned fifteen; and the silver teapot, too—your father niver paid for 'em. And to think as he should ha' married me, and brought me to this."

* * * * *

Maggie had witnessed this scene with gathering anger. The implied reproaches against her father —her father, who was lying there in a sort of living death—neutralised all her pity for griefs about table-cloths and china; and her anger on her father's account was heightened by some egoistic resentment at Tom's silent concurrence with her mother in shutting her out from the common calamity. She had become almost indifferent to her mother's habitual depreciation of her, but she was keenly alive to any sanction of it, however passive, that she might suspect in Tom. Poor Maggie was by no means made up of unalloyed devotedness, but put forth large claims for herself where she loved strongly. She burst out

at last in an agitated, almost violent tone, " Mother, how can you talk so ? as if you cared only for things with *your* name on, and not for what has my father's name too—and to care about anything but dear father himself !—when he's lying there, and may never speak to us again. Tom, you ought to say so too—you ought not to let any one find fault with my father."

Maggie, almost choked with mingled grief and anger, left the room, and took her old place on her father's bed. Her heart went out to him with a stronger movement than ever, at the thought that people would blame him. Maggie hated blame : she had been blamed all her life, and nothing had come of it but evil tempers. Her father had always defended and excused her, and her loving remembrance of his tenderness was a force within her that would enable her to do or bear anything for his sake.

[*The aunts and uncles arrive and hold a council.*]

" Then, aunt," he [Tom] said, looking straight at Mrs. Glegg, " if you think it's a disgrace to the family that we should be sold up, wouldn't it be better to prevent it altogether ? And if you and my aunt Pullet," he continued, looking at the latter, " think of leaving any money to me and Maggie, wouldn't it be better to give it now, and pay the debt we're going to be sold up for, and save my mother from parting with her furniture ? "

There was silence for a few moments, for everyone, including Maggie, was astonished at Tom's sudden manliness of tone. Uncle Glegg was the first to speak.

"Ay, ay, young man—come now! You show some notion o' things. But there's the interest, you must remember; your aunts get five per cent. on their money, and they'd lose that if they advanced it—you haven't thought o' that."

"I could work and pay that every year," said Tom promptly. "I'd do anything to save my mother from parting with her things."

"Well done!" said uncle Glegg admiringly. He had been drawing Tom out, rather than reflecting on the practicability of his proposal. But he had produced the unfortunate result of irritating his wife.

"Yes, Mr. Glegg!" said that lady with angry sarcasm. "It's pleasant work for you to be giving my money away, as you've pretended to leave at my own disposal. And my money, as was my own father's gift, and not yours, Mr. Glegg; and I've saved it, and added to it myself, and had more to put out almost every year, and it's to go and be sunk in other folks' furniture, and encourage 'em in luxury and extravagance as they've no means of supporting; and I'm to alter my will, or have a codicil made, and leave two or three hundred less behind me when I die—me as have allays done right and been careful, and the eldest o' the family; and my money's to go and be squandered on them as have had the same chance as me, only they've been wicked and wasteful. Sister Pullet, *you* may do as you like, and you let your husband rob you back again o' the money he's given you, but that isn't *my* sperrit."

"La, Jane, how fiery you are!" said Mrs. Pullet. "I'm sure you'll have the blood in your head, and have to be cupped. I'm sorry for Bessy and her children—I'm sure I think of 'em o' nights dreadful,

for I sleep very bad wi' this new medicine: but it's no use for me to think o' doing anything, if you won't meet me half-way."

"Why, there's this to be considered," said Mr. Glegg. "It's no use to pay off this debt and save the furniture, when there's all the law debts behind, as 'ud take every shilling, and more than could be made out o' land and stock, for I've made that out from Lawyer Gore. We'd need save our money to keep the poor man with, instead o' spending it on furniture as he can neither eat nor drink. You *will* be so hasty, Jane, as if I didn't know what was reasonable."

"Then speak accordingly, Mr. Glegg!" said his wife, with slow, loud emphasis, bending her head towards him significantly.

[*It is proposed to call in the £300 lent to the Mosses, but Tom opposes this on the ground that his father would not wish it. Mr. Tulliver has a short spell of consciousness.*]

"Well, Bessy," he said, as she kissed him, "you must forgive me if you're worse off than you iver expected to be. But it's the fault o' the law—it's none o' mine," he added angrily. "It's the fault o' raskills! Tom—you mind this: if iver you've got the chance, you make Wakem smart. If you don't, you're a good-for-nothing son. You might horsewhip him—but he'd set the law on you—the law's made to take care o' raskills."

[*Tom goes to see his Uncle Deane, a partner in Guest and Co., and finally gets employed by that firm in their warehouse.*]

In that dark time of December, the sale of the household furniture lasted beyond the middle of the second day. Mr. Tulliver, who had begun, in his intervals of consciousness, to manifest an irritability which often appeared to have as a direct effect the recurrence of spasmodic rigidity and insensibility, had lain in this living death throughout the critical hours when the noise of their sale came nearest to his chamber . . . . and the wife and children had sat imprisoned in the silent chamber, watching the large, prostrate figure on the bed, and trembling lest the blank face should suddenly show some response to the sounds which fell on their own ears with such obstinate, painful repetition.

But it was over at last—that time of importunate certainty and eye-straining suspense. The sharp sound of a voice, almost as metallic as the rap that followed it, had ceased; the tramping of footsteps on the gravel had died out. Mrs. Tulliver's blonde face seemed aged ten years by the last thirty hours: the poor woman's mind had been busy divining when her favourite things were being knocked down by the terrible hammer; her heart had been fluttering at the thought that first one thing and then another had gone to be identified as hers in the hateful publicity of the Golden Lion; and all the while she had to sit and make no sign of this inward agitation.

* * * * *

By the beginning of the second week in January the bills were out advertising the sale, under a decree

of Chancery, of Mr. Tulliver's farming and other stock, to be followed by the sale of the mill and land, held in the proper after-dinner hour at the Golden Lion. The miller himself, unaware of the lapse of time, fancied himself still in that first stage of his misfortunes when expedients might be thought of ; and often in his conscious hours talked in a feeble, disjointed manner, of plans he would carry out when he " got well." The wife and children were not without hope of an issue that would at least save Mr. Tulliver from leaving the spot, and seeking an entirely strange life. For uncle Deane had been induced to interest himself in this stage of the business. It would not, he acknowledged, be a bad speculation for Guest & Co. to buy Dorlcote Mill, and carry on the business, which was a good one, and might be increased by the addition of steam-power ; in which case Tulliver might be retained as manager. Still Mr. Deane would say nothing decided about the matter : the fact that Wakem held the mortgage on the land might put it into his head to bid for the whole estate, and further, to outbid the cautious firm of Guest & Co., who did not carry on business on sentimental grounds.

* * * * *

But all this while Mrs. Tulliver was brooding over a scheme by which she, and no one else, would avert the result most to be dreaded, and prevent Wakem from entertaining the purpose of bidding for the mill. Imagine a truly respectable and amiable hen, by some portentous anomaly, taking to reflection and inventing combinations by which she might prevail on Hodge not to wring her neck, or send her and her chicks to market : the result could hardly be other than much cackling and fluttering. Mrs. Tulliver,

seeing that everything had gone wrong, had begun to think that she had been too passive in life ; and that, if she had applied her mind to business, and taken a strong resolution now and then, it would have been all the better for her and her family. Nobody, it appeared, had thought of going to speak to Wakem on this business of the mill ; and yet, Mrs. Tulliver reflected, it would have been quite the shortest method of securing the right end.

* * * * *

" What does all this mean, Mrs. Tulliver ? " said Mr. Wakem rather sharply. " What do you want to ask me ? "

" Why, sir, if you'll be so good," said Mrs. Tulliver, starting a little, and speaking more hurriedly, " if you'll be so good not to buy the mill an' the land—the land wouldn't so much matter, only my husband 'ull be like mad at your having it."

Something like a new thought flashed across Mr. Wakem's face as he said, " Who told you I meant to buy it ? "

" Why, sir, it's none o' my inventing, and I should niver ha' thought of it ; for my husband, as ought to know about the law, he allays used to say as lawyers had niver no call to buy anything—either lands or houses—for they allays got 'em into their hands other ways." . . .

[*Mr. Wakem resolves to buy the Mill and employ Tulliver.*]

Now Mrs. Tulliver had put the notion into his head, it presented itself to him as a pleasure to do the very thing that would cause Mr. Tulliver the most deadly

mortification—and a pleasure of a complex kind, not made up of crude malice, but mingling with it the relish of self-approbation. To see an enemy humiliated gives a certain contentment, but this is jejune compared with the highly-blent satisfaction of seeing him humiliated by your benevolent action or concession on his behalf. That is a sort of revenge which falls into the scale of virtue, and Wakem was not without an intention of keeping that scale respectably filled. . . . But there were good reasons for purchasing Dorlcote Mill, quite apart from any benevolent vengeance on the miller. It was really a capital investment; besides, Guest & Co. were going to bid for it. Mr. Guest and Mr. Wakem were on friendly dining terms, and the attorney liked to predominate over a ship-owner and mill-owner who was a little too loud in the town affairs as well as in his table-talk.

[*Mr. Tulliver is convalescent.*]

Mrs. Tulliver said Tom must not go to St. Ogg's at the usual hour—he must wait and see his father downstairs: and Tom complied, though with an intense inward shrinking from the painful scene. The hearts of all three had been more deeply dejected than ever during the last few days. For Guest & Co. had not bought the mill: both mill and land had been knocked down to Wakem, who had been over the premises, and had laid before Mr. Deane and Mr. Glegg, in Mrs. Tulliver's presence, his willingness to employ Mr. Tulliver, in case of his recovery, as a manager of the business. . . . Here was an opportunity for Mr. Tulliver to provide for his wife and daughter without any assistance from his wife's

relations, and without that too evident descent into pauperism which makes it annoying to respectable people to meet the degraded member of the family by the wayside. Mr. Tulliver, Mrs. Glegg considered, must be made to feel, when he came to his right mind, that he could never humble himself enough; for *that* had come which she had always foreseen would come of his insolence in time past "to them as were the best friends he'd got to look to." Mr. Glegg and Mr. Deane were less stern in their views, but they both of them thought Tulliver had done enough harm by his hot-tempered crotchets, and ought to put them out of the question when a livelihood was offered him: Wakem showed a right feeling about the matter—*he* had no grudge against Tulliver. Tom had protested against entertaining the proposition: he shouldn't like his father to be under Wakem; he thought it would look mean-spirited; but his mother's main distress was the utter impossibility of ever "turning Mr. Tulliver round about Wakem," or getting him to hear reason—no, they would all have to go and live in a pigsty on purpose to spite Wakem, who spoke "so as nobody could be fairer."

[*Mr. Tulliver takes up his Bible.*]

"Ah . . . Elizabeth Dodson . . . it's eighteen year since I married her——"

"Come next Ladyday," said Mrs. Tulliver, going up to his side and looking at the page.

Her husband fixed his eyes earnestly on her face.

"Poor Bessy," he said, "you was a pretty lass then—everybody said so—and I used to think you kept your good looks rarely. But you're sorely aged . . . don't you bear me ill-will . . . I meant to do

well by you . . . we promised one another for better or for worse——"

"But I never thought it 'ud be so for worse as this," said poor Mrs. Tulliver, with the strange scared look that had come over her of late; "and my poor father gave me away . . . and to come on so all at once——"

"Oh, mother," said Maggie, "don't talk in that way."

"No, I know you won't let your poor mother speak . . . that's been the way all my life . . . your father niver minded what I said . . . it 'ud have been o' no use for me to beg and pray . . . and it 'ud be no use now, not if I was to go down o' my hands and knees——"

"Don't say so, Bessy," said Mr. Tulliver, whose pride, in these first moments of humiliation, was in abeyance to the sense of some justice in his wife's reproach. "If there's anything left as I could do to make you amends, I wouldn't say you nay."

"Then we might stay here and get a living, and I might keep among my own sisters . . . and me been such a good wife to you, and niver crossed you from week's end to week's end . . . and they all say so . . . they say it 'ud be nothing but right . . . only you're so turned against Wakem."

"Mother," said Tom severely, "this is not the time to talk about that."

"Let her be," said Mr. Tulliver. "Say what you mean, Bessy."

"Why, now the mill and the land's all Wakem's, and he's got iverything in his hands, what's the use o' setting your face against him?—when he says you may stay here, and speaks as fair as can be, and says you may manage the business, and have thirty shillings

a week, and a horse to ride about to market? And where have we got to put our heads? We must go into one o' the cottages in the village . . . and me and my children brought down to that . . . and all because you must set your mind against folks till there's no turning you."

Mr. Tulliver had sunk back in his chair, trembling.

"You may do as you like wi' me, Bessy," he said in a low voice; "I've been the bringing of you to poverty . . . this world's too many for me . . . I'm nought but a bankrupt—it's no use standing up for anything now."

[*Mr. Tulliver tells Tom to write in the Bible.*]

"Oh, father, what?" said Maggie, sinking down by his knee, pale and trembling. "It's wicked to curse and bear malice."

"It isn't wicked, I tell you," said her father fiercely. "It's wicked as the raskills should prosper—it's the devil's doing. Do as I tell you, Tom. Write."

"What am I to write?" said Tom, with gloomy submission.

"Write as your father, Edward Tulliver, took service under John Wakem, the man as had helped to ruin him, because I'd promised my wife to make her what amends I could for her trouble, and because I wanted to die in th' old place where I was born and my father was born. Put that i' the right words—you know how—and then write, as I don't forgive Wakem for all that; and for all I'll serve him honest, I wish evil may befall him. Write that."

There was a dead silence as Tom's pen moved along the paper: Mrs. Tulliver looked scared, and Maggie trembled like a leaf.

"Now let me hear what you've wrote," said Mr. Tulliver. Tom read aloud, slowly.

"Now write—write as you'll remember what Wakem's done to your father, and you'll make him and his feel it, if ever the day comes. And sign your name Thomas Tulliver."

"Oh no, father, dear father!" said Maggie, almost choked with fear. "You shouldn't make Tom write that."

"Be quiet, Maggie!" said Tom. "I *shall* write it."

[*Mr. Tulliver resumes his work.*]

He could not be reconciled with his lot: there was no attitude in which his pride did not feel its bruises; and in all behaviour towards him, whether kind or cold, he detected an allusion to the change in his circumstances. Even the days on which Wakem came to ride round the land and inquire into the business, were not so black to him as those market-days on which he had met several creditors who had accepted a composition from him. To save something towards the repayment of those creditors, was the object towards which he was now bending all his thoughts and efforts; and under the influence of this all-compelling demand of his nature, the somewhat profuse man, who hated to be stinted or to stint any one else in his own house, was gradually metamorphosed into the keen-eyed grudger of morsels. Mrs. Tulliver could not economise enough to satisfy him in their food and firing; and he would eat nothing himself but what was of the coarsest quality. Tom, though depressed and strongly repelled by his father's sullenness, and the dreariness of home, entered

thoroughly into his father's feelings about paying the creditors ; and the poor lad brought his first quarter's money, with a delicious sense of achievement, and gave it to his father to put into the tin box which held the savings.

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Under all this grim melancholy and narrowing concentration of desire, Mr. Tulliver retained the feeling towards his " little wench " which made her presence a need to him, though it would not suffice to cheer him. She was still the desire of his eyes ; but the sweet spring of fatherly love was now mingled with bitterness, like everything else. When Maggie laid down her work at night, it was her habit to get a low stool and sit by her father's knee, leaning her cheek against it. How she wished he would stroke her head, or give some sign that he was soothed by the sense that he had a daughter who loved him ! But now she got no answer to her little caresses, either from her father or from Tom—the two idols of her life.

[*Maggie reads " The Imitation of Christ."*]

Maggie drew a long breath and pushed her heavy hair back, as if to see a sudden vision more clearly. Here, then, was a secret of life that would enable her to renounce all other secrets—here was a sublime height to be reached without the help of outward things—here was insight, and strength, and conquest, to be won by means entirely within her own soul, where a supreme Teacher was waiting to be heard. It flashed through her like the suddenly apprehended solution of a problem, that all the miseries of her young life had come from fixing her heart on her own

pleasure, as if that were the central necessity of the universe; and for the first time she saw the possibility of shifting the position from which she looked at the gratification of her own desires—of taking her stand out of herself, and looking at her own life as an insignificant part of a divinely-guided whole. She read on and on in the old book, devouring eagerly the dialogues with the invisible Teacher, the pattern of sorrow, the source of all strength; returning to it after she had been called away, and reading till the sun went down behind the willows. With all the hurry of an imagination that could never rest in the present, she sat in the deepening twilight forming plans of self-humiliation and entire devotedness; and, in the ardour of first discovery, renunciation seemed to her the entrance into that satisfaction which she had so long been craving in vain. She had not perceived—how could she until she had lived longer?—the inmost truth of the old monk's outpourings, that renunciation remains sorrow, though a sorrow borne willingly. Maggie was still panting for happiness, and was in ecstasy because she had found the key to it.

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From what you know of her, you will not be surprised that she threw some exaggeration and wilfulness, some pride and impetuosity even into her self-renunciation: her own life was still a drama for her, in which she demanded of herself that her part should be played with intensity. And so it came to pass that she often lost the spirit of humility by being excessive in the outward act; she often strove after too high a flight, and came down with her poor little half-fledged wings dabbled in the mud. For example,

she not only determined to work at plain sewing, that she might contribute something towards the fund in the tin box, but she went, in the first instance, in her zeal of self-mortification, to ask for it at the linen-shop in St. Ogg's, instead of getting it in a more quiet and indirect way ; and could see nothing but what was entirely wrong and unkind, nay, persecuting, in Tom's reproof of her for this unnecessary act. " I don't like *my* sister to do such things," said Tom ; " *I'll* take care that the debts are paid, without your lowering yourself in that way." Surely there was some tenderness and bravery mingled with the worldliness and self-assertion of that little speech ; but Maggie held it as dross, overlooking the grains of gold, and took Tom's rebuke as one of her outward crosses. Tom was very hard to her, she used to think, in her long night-watchings—to her who had always loved him so ; and then she strove to be contented with that hardness, and to require nothing.

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You may see her now, as she walks down the favourite turning, and enters the Deeps by a narrow path through a group of Scotch firs—her tall figure and old lavender gown visible through a hereditary black silk shawl of some wide-meshed net-like material; and now she is sure of being unseen, she takes off her bonnet and ties it over her arm. One would certainly suppose her to be further on in life than her seventeenth year—perhaps because of the slow, resigned sadness of the glance, from which all search and unrest seem to have departed, perhaps because her broad-chested figure has the mould of early womanhood. Youth and health have withstood well the involuntary and voluntary hardships of her lot, and

the nights in which she has lain on the hard floor for a penance have left no obvious trace; the eyes are liquid, the brown cheek is firm and rounded, the full lips are red. With her dark colouring and jet crown surmounting her tall figure, she seems to have a sort of kinship with the grand Scotch firs, at which she is looking up as if she loved them well. Yet one has a sense of uneasiness in looking at her—a sense of opposing elements, of which a fierce collision is imminent: surely there is a hushed expression, such as one often sees in older faces under borderless caps, out of keeping with the resistant youth, which one expects to flash out in a sudden, passionate glance, that will dissipate all the quietude, like a damp fire leaping out again when all seemed safe.

[*She meets Philip Wakem.*]

"You startled me," she said, smiling faintly; "I never meet any one here. How came you to be walking here? Did you come to meet *me?*"

It was impossible not to perceive that Maggie felt herself a child again.

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"I wish we could have been friends—I mean, if it would have been good and right for us. But that is the trial I have to bear in everything: I may not keep anything I used to love when I was little. The old books went; and Tom is different—and my father. It is like death. I must part with everything I cared for when I was a child. And I must part with you: we must never take any notice of each other again. That was what I wanted to speak to you for. I wanted to let you know that Tom and I can't do as we

like about such things, and that if I behave as if I had forgotten all about you, it is not out of envy or pride—or—or any bad feeling."

Maggie spoke with more and more sorrowful gentleness as she went on, and her eyes began to fill with tears. The deepening expression of pain on Philip's face gave him a stronger resemblance to his boyish self, and made the deformity appeal more strongly to her pity.

"I know—I see all that you mean," he said in a voice that had become feebler from discouragement: "I know what there is to keep us apart on both sides. But it is not right, Maggie—don't you be angry with me, I am so used to call you Maggie in my thoughts—it is not right to sacrifice everything to other people's unreasonable feelings. I would give up a great deal for *my* father; but I would not give up a friendship or—or an attachment of any sort, in obedience to any wish of his that I didn't recognise as right."

"I don't know," said Maggie musingly. "Often, when I have been angry and discontented, it has seemed to me that I was not bound to give up anything; and I have gone on thinking till it has seemed to me that I could think away all my duty. But no good has ever come of that—it was an evil state of mind. I'm quite sure that whatever I might do, I should wish in the end that I had gone without anything for myself, rather than have made my father's life harder to him." . . .

"I've been a great deal happier," she said at last timidly, "since I have given up thinking about what is easy and pleasant, and being discontented because I couldn't have my own will. Our life is determined for us—and it makes the mind very free when we

give up wishing, and only think of bearing what is laid upon us, and doing what is given us to do."

"But I can't give up wishing," said Philip impatiently. "It seems to me we can never give up longing and wishing while we are thoroughly alive. There are certain things we feel to be beautiful and good, and we *must* hunger after them. How can we ever be satisfied without them until our feelings are deadened? I delight in fine pictures—I long to be able to paint such. I strive and strive, and can't produce what I want. That is pain to me, and always *will* be pain, until my faculties lose their keenness, like aged eyes. Then there are many other things I long for"—here Philip hesitated a little, and then said—"things that other men have, and that will always be denied me. My life will have nothing great or beautiful in it; I would rather not have lived."

"Oh, Philip," said Maggie, "I wish you didn't feel so." But her heart began to beat with something of Philip's discontent.

"Well then," said he, turning quickly round and fixing his gray eyes entreatingly on her face, "I should be contented to live, if you would let me see you sometimes." Then, checked by a fear which her face suggested, he looked away again, and said more calmly, "I have no friend to whom I can tell everything—no one who cares enough about me; and if I could only see you now and then, and you would let me talk to you a little, and show me that you cared for me—and that we may always be friends in heart, and help each other—then I might come to be glad of life."

[*Through the advice of a friend, Tom is making some profitable investments. Also, Guest and Co. improve his position.*]

At the time of Maggie's first meeting with Philip, Tom had already nearly a hundred and fifty pounds of his own capital; and while they were walking by the evening light in the Red Deeps, he, by the same evening light, was riding into Laceham, proud of being on his first journey on behalf of Guest & Co., and revolving in his mind all the chances that by the end of another year he should have doubled his gains, lifted off the obloquy of debt from his father's name, and perhaps—for he should be twenty-one—have got a new start for himself, on a higher platform of employment. Did he not deserve it? He was quite sure that he did.

[*Maggie sees Philip again, to tell him they must meet no more.*]

"Yes, Maggie," said Philip vehemently; "and you are shutting yourself up in a narrow, self-delusive fanaticism, which is only a way of escaping pain by starving into dulness all the highest powers of your nature. Joy and peace are not resignation: resignation is the willing endurance of a pain that is not allayed—that you don't expect to be allayed. Stupefaction is not resignation: and it is stupefaction to remain in ignorance—to shut up all the avenues by which the life of your fellow-men might become known to you. I am not resigned: I am not sure that life is long enough to learn that lesson. *You* are not resigned: you are only trying to stupefy yourself."

Maggie's lips trembled; she felt there was some truth in what Philip said, and yet there was a deeper consciousness that, for any immediate application it had to her conduct, it was no better than falsity. Her double impression corresponded to the double impulse of the speaker. Philip seriously believed what he said, but he said it with vehemence because it made an argument against the resolution that opposed his wishes. But Maggie's face, made more childlike by the gathering tears, touched him with a tenderer, less egoistic feeling. He took her hand and said gently—

"Don't let us think of such things in this short half-hour, Maggie. Let us only care about being together. . . . We shall be friends in spite of separation. . . . We shall always think of each other. I shall be glad to live as long as you are alive, because I shall think there may always come a time when I can—when you will let me help you in some way."

"What a dear, good brother you would have been, Philip," said Maggie, smiling through the haze of tears. "I think you would have made as much fuss about me, and been as pleased for me to love you, as would have satisfied even me."

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"Why do you speak so bitterly to me, Philip?" said Maggie.

"Because I foresee it will not end well: you can never carry on this self-torture."

"I shall have strength given me," said Maggie tremulously.

"No, you will not, Maggie: no one has strength given to do what is unnatural. It is mere cowardice to seek safety in negations. No character becomes

strong in that way. You will be thrown into the world some day, and then every rational satisfaction of your nature that you deny now, will assault you like a savage appetite."

* * * * *

"Do you banish me from this place for ever, then, Maggie? Surely I may come and walk in it sometimes? If I meet you by chance, there is no concealment in that?"

It is the moment when our resolution seems about to become irrevocable—when the fatal iron gates are about to close upon us—that tests our strength. Then, after hours of clear reasoning and firm conviction, we snatch at any sophistry that will nullify our long struggles, and bring us the defeat that we love better than victory.

Maggie felt her heart leap at this subterfuge of Philip's, and there passed over her face that almost imperceptible shock which accompanies any relief. He saw it, and they parted in silence.

[*On another occasion Philip tells Maggie that he loves her.*]

They were walking hand in hand, looking at each other. Maggie, indeed, was hurrying along, for she felt it time to be gone. But the sense that their parting was near, made her more anxious lest she should have unintentionally left some painful impression on Philip's mind. It was one of those dangerous moments when speech is at once sincere and deceptive —when feeling, rising high above its average depth, leaves flood-marks which are never reached again.

They stopped to part among the Scotch firs.

"Then my life will be filled with hope, Maggie—and I shall be happier than other men, in spite of all? We *do* belong to each other—for always—whether we are apart or together?"

"Yes, Philip: I should like never to part: I should like to make your life very happy."

"I am waiting for something else—I wonder whether it will come."

Maggie smiled, with glistening tears, and then stooped her tall head to kiss the pale face that was full of pleading, timid love—like a woman's.

She had a moment of real happiness then—a moment of belief that, if there were sacrifice in this love, it was all the richer and more satisfying.

[*Aunt Pullet comes to tea.*]

"Ah, it's poor talking about littleness and bigness—anybody may think it's a mercy they're straight," said aunt Pullet. "There's that mismade son o' Lawyer Wakem's—I saw him at church to-day. Dear, dear! to think o' the property he's like to have; and they say he's very queer and lonely—doesn't like much company. I shouldn't wonder if he goes out of his mind; for we niver come along the road but he's a-scrambling out o' the trees and brambles at the Red Deeps."

This wide statement, by which Mrs. Pullet represented the fact that she had twice seen Philip at the spot indicated, produced an effect on Maggie which was all the stronger because Tom sat opposite her, and she was intensely anxious to look indifferent. At Philip's name she had blushed, and the blush deepened every instant from consciousness, until the mention of the Red Deeps made her feel as if the

whole secret were betrayed, and she dared not even hold her teaspoon lest she should show how she trembled. She sat with her hands clasped under the table, not daring to look round. Happily, her father was seated on the same side with herself, beyond her uncle Pullet, and could not see her face without stooping forward. Her mother's voice brought the first relief—turning the conversation ; for Mrs. Tulliver was always alarmed when the name of Wakem was mentioned in her husband's presence. Gradually Maggie recovered composure enough to look up ; her eyes met Tom's, but he turned away his head immediately ; and she went to bed that night wondering if he had gathered any suspicion from her confusion.

* * * * *

" Tom, how is it that you are come home ? Is there anything the matter ? " Maggie spoke in a low, tremulous voice.

" I'm come to walk with you to the Red Deeps and meet Philip Wakem," said Tom, the central fold in his brow, which had become habitual with him, deepening as he spoke.

Maggie stood helpless—pale and cold. By some means, then, Tom knew everything. At last she said, " I'm not going," and turned round.

" Yes, you are ; but I want to speak to you first. . . . Now, Maggie, tell me this instant everything that has passed between you and Philip Wakem."

" Does my father know anything ? " said Maggie, still trembling.

" No," said Tom indignantly. " But he *shall* know, if you attempt to use deceit towards me any further."

" I don't wish to use deceit," said Maggie, flushing

into resentment at hearing this word applied to her conduct.

"Tell me the whole truth, then."

"Perhaps you know it."

"Never mind whether I know it or not. Tell me exactly what has happened, or my father shall know everything."

"I tell it for my father's sake, then."

"Yes, it becomes you to profess affection for your father, when you have despised his strongest feelings."

"You never do wrong, Tom," said Maggie tauntingly.

"Not if I know it," answered Tom, with proud sincerity. "But I have nothing to say to you beyond this: tell me what has passed between you and Philip Wakem. When did you first meet him in the Red Deeps?"

"A year ago," said Maggie quietly. Tom's severity gave her a certain fund of defiance, and kept her sense of error in abeyance. "You need ask me no more questions. We have been friendly a year. We have met and walked together often. He has lent me books."

"Is that all?" said Tom, looking straight at her with his frown.

Maggie paused a moment; then, determined to make an end of Tom's right to accuse her of deceit, she said haughtily—

"No, not quite all. On Saturday he told me that he loved me. I didn't think of it before then—I had only thought of him as an old friend."

"And you *encouraged* him?" said Tom, with an expression of disgust.

"I told him that I loved him too."

Tom was silent for a few moments, looking on the

ground and frowning, with his hands in his pockets. At last he looked up and said coldly—

"Now, then, Maggie, there are but two courses for you to take; either you vow solemnly to me, with your hand on my father's Bible, that you will never have another meeting or speak another word in private with Philip Wakem, or you refuse, and I tell my father everything; and this month, when by my exertions he might be made happy once more, you will cause him the blow of knowing that you are a disobedient, deceitful daughter, who throws away her own respectability by clandestine meetings with the son of a man that has helped to ruin her father. Choose!" Tom ended with cold decision, going up to the large Bible, drawing it forward, and opening it at the fly-leaf, where the writing was. . . .

"Tom," she said in a low voice, "it was wrong of me—but I was so lonely—and I was sorry for Philip. And I think enmity and hatred are wicked."

"Nonsense!" said Tom. "Your duty was clear enough. Say no more; but promise, in the words I told you."

"I *must* speak to Philip once more."

"You will go with me now and speak to him."

"I give you my word not to meet him or write to him again without your knowledge. That is the only thing I will say. I will put my hand on the Bible if you like."

"Say it, then."

Maggie laid her hand on the page of manuscript and repeated the promise. Tom closed the book, and said, "Now, let us go."

* * * * *

Another turning, and they came so close upon him that both Tom and Philip stopped suddenly within

a yard of each other. There was a moment's silence, in which Philip darted a look of inquiry at Maggie's face. He saw an answer there, in the pale parted lips, and the terrified tension of the large eyes. Her imagination, always rushing extravagantly beyond an immediate impression, saw her tall strong brother grasping the feeble Philip bodily, crushing him and trampling on him.

"Do you call this acting the part of a man and a gentleman, sir?" Tom said, in a voice of harsh scorn, as soon as Philip's eyes were turned on him again.

"What do you mean?" answered Philip haughtily.

"Mean? Stand farther from me, lest I should lay hands on you, and I'll tell you what I mean. I mean, taking advantage of a young girl's foolishness and ignorance to get her to have secret meetings with you. I mean, daring to trifle with the respectability of a family that has a good and honest name to support."

"I deny that," interrupted Philip impetuously. "I could never trifle with anything that affected your sister's happiness. She is dearer to me than she is to you; I honour her more than you can ever honour her; I would give up my life to her." . . .

"I should be very sorry to understand your feelings," said Tom, with scorching contempt. "What I wish is that you should understand *me*—that I shall take care of *my* sister, and that if you dare to make the least attempt to come near her, or to write to her, or to keep the slightest hold on her mind, your puny, miserable body, that ought to have put some modesty into your mind, shall not protect you. I'll thrash you—I'll hold you up to public scorn. Who wouldn't laugh at the idea of *your* turning lover to a fine girl?"

"Tom, I will not bear it—I will listen no longer," Maggie burst out, in a convulsed voice.

"Stay, Maggie!" said Philip, making a strong effort to speak. Then, looking at Tom, "You have dragged your sister here, I suppose, that she may stand by while you threaten and insult me. These naturally seemed to you the right means to influence me. But you are mistaken. Let your sister speak. If she says she is bound to give me up, I shall abide by her wishes to the slightest word."

"It was for my father's sake, Philip," said Maggie imploringly. "Tom threatens to tell my father—and he couldn't bear it: I have promised, I have vowed solemnly, that we will not have any intercourse without my brother's knowledge."

"It is enough, Maggie. *I* shall not change; but I wish you to hold yourself entirely free. But trust me—remember that I can never seek for anything but good to what belongs to you."

"Yes," said Tom, exasperated by this attitude of Philip's, "you can talk of seeking good for her and what belongs to her now: did you seek her good before?" . . .

He seized Maggie's right wrist as he spoke, and she put out her left hand. Philip clasped it in an instant, with one eager look, and then hurried away.

Tom and Maggie walked on in silence for some yards. He was still holding her wrist tightly, as if he were compelling a culprit from the scene of action. At last Maggie, with a violent snatch, drew her hand away, and her pent-up, long-gathered irritation burst into utterance.

"Don't suppose that I think you are right, Tom, or that I bow to your will. I despise the feelings you have shown in speaking to Philip: I detest your insulting, unmanly allusions to his deformity. You have been reproaching other people all your life—you

have been always sure you yourself are right: it is because you have not a mind large enough to see that there is anything better than your own conduct and your own petty aims."

"Certainly," said Tom coolly. "I don't see that your conduct is better, or your aims either. If your conduct, and Philip Wakem's conduct, has been right, why are you ashamed of its being known? Answer me that. I know what I have aimed at in my conduct, and I've succeeded: pray, what good has your conduct brought to you or any one else?"

"I don't want to defend myself," said Maggie, still with vehemence: "I know I've been wrong—often, continually. But yet, sometimes when I have done wrong, it has been because I have feelings that you would be the better for, if you had them. If *you* were in fault ever—if you had done anything very wrong, I should be sorry for the pain it brought you; I should not want punishment to be heaped on you. But you have always enjoyed punishing me—you have always been hard and cruel to me: even when I was a little girl, and always loved you better than any one else in the world, you would let me go crying to bed without forgiving me. You have no pity: you have no sense of your own imperfection and your own sins." . . .

"Well," said Tom, with cold scorn, "if your feelings are so much better than mine, let me see you show them in some other way than by conduct that's likely to disgrace us all—than by ridiculous flights first into one extreme and then into another. Pray, how have you shown your love, that you talk of, either to me or my father? By disobeying and deceiving us. I have a different way of showing my affection."

* * * * *

Life was not so short, then, and perfect rest was not so near as she had dreamed when she was two years younger. There was more struggle for her—perhaps more falling. If she had felt that she was entirely wrong, and that Tom had been entirely right, she could sooner have recovered more inward harmony; but now her penitence and submission were constantly obstructed by resentment that would present itself to her no otherwise than as a just indignation. Her heart bled for Philip: she went on recalling the insults that had been flung at him with so vivid a conception of what he had felt under them, that it was almost like a sharp bodily pain to her, making her beat the floor with her foot, and tighten her fingers on her palm.

And yet, how was it that she was now and then conscious of a certain dim background of relief in the forced separation from Philip? Surely it was only because the sense of a deliverance from concealment was welcome at any cost.

[*Tom tells his father that he now has sufficient money to pay their debts.*]

"Shake hands wi' me, my lad," he said, suddenly putting out his hand. "It's a great thing when a man can be proud as he's got a good son. I've had *that* luck."

Tom never lived to taste another moment so delicious as that; and Maggie couldn't help forgetting her own grievances. Tom *was* good; and in the sweet humility that springs in us all in moments of true admiration and gratitude, she felt that the faults he had to pardon in her had never been redeemed, as

his faults were. She felt no jealousy this evening that, for the first time, she seemed to be thrown into the background in her father's mind.

* * * * *

"Tulliver," said Wakem abruptly, in a haughtier tone than usual, "what a fool's trick you did—spreading those hard lumps on that Far Close! I told you how it would be; but you men never learn to farm with any method."

"Oh!" said Tulliver, suddenly boiling up; "get somebody else to farm for you, then, as'll ask *you* to teach him."

"You have been drinking, I suppose," said Wakem, really believing that this was the meaning of Tulliver's flushed face and sparkling eyes.

"No, I've not been drinking," said Tulliver; "I want no drinking to help me to make up my mind as I'll serve no longer under a scoundrel."

"Very well; you may leave my premises to-morrow, then: hold your insolent tongue and let me pass." (Tulliver was backing his horse across the road to hem Wakem in.)

"No, I *shan't* let you pass," said Tulliver, getting fiercer. "I shall tell you what I think of you first. You're too big a raskill to get hanged—you're——"

"Let me pass, you ignorant brute, or I'll ride over you."

Mr. Tulliver, spurring his horse and raising his whip, made a rush forward, and Wakem's horse, rearing and staggering backward, threw his rider from the saddle and sent him sideways on the ground. Wakem had had the presence of mind to loose the bridle at once, and as the horse only staggered a few paces and then stood still, he might have risen and

remounted without more inconvenience than a bruise and a shake. But before he could rise, Tulliver was off his horse too. The sight of the long-hated predominant man down and in his power threw him into a frenzy of triumphant vengeance, which seemed to give him preternatural agility and strength. He rushed on Wakem, who was in the act of trying to recover his feet, grasped him by the left arm so as to press Wakem's whole weight on the right arm, which rested on the ground, and flogged him fiercely across the back with his riding-whip. Wakem shouted for help, but no help came, until a woman's scream was heard, and the cry of " Father, father ! "

Suddenly, Wakem felt something had arrested Mr. Tulliver's arm ; for the flogging ceased, and the grasp on his own arm was relaxed.

" Get away with you—go ! " said Tulliver angrily. But it was not to Wakem that he spoke. Slowly the lawyer rose, and, as he turned his head, saw that Tulliver's arms were being held by a girl—rather by the fear of hurting the girl that clung to him with all her young might.

" Oh, Luke—mother—come and help Mr. Wakem ! " Maggie cried, as she heard the longed-for footsteps.

" Help me on to that low horse," said Wakem to Luke, " then I shall perhaps manage : though—confound it—I think this arm is sprained."

With some difficulty, Wakem was heaved on to Tulliver's horse. Then he turned towards the miller and said, with white rage, " You'll suffer for this, sir. Your daughter is a witness that you've assaulted me."

" I don't care," said Mr. Tulliver, in a thick, fierce voice ; " go and show your back, and tell 'em I thrashed you. Tell 'em I've made things a bit more even i' the world."

[*Mr. Tulliver is taken ill, and in the early morning his family stand by his bed.*]

"I had my turn—I beat him. That was nothing but fair. I niver wanted anything but what was fair."

"But, father, dear father," said Maggie, an unspeakable anxiety predominating over her grief, "you forgive him—you forgive every one now?"

He did not move his eyes to look at her, but he said—

"No, my wench. I don't forgive him. . . . What's forgiving to do? I can't love a raskill——"

His voice had become thicker; but he wanted to say more, and moved his lips again and again, struggling in vain to speak. At length the words forced their way.

"Does God forgive raskills? . . . but if He does, He won't be hard wi' me."

[*Mr. Tulliver dies.*]

Tom and Maggie went downstairs together into the room where their father's place was empty. Their eyes turned to the same spot, and Maggie spoke—

"Tom, forgive me—let us always love each other"; and they clung and wept together.

[*Two years have passed, and Mrs. Deane has died, and Mrs. Tulliver has her home with Mr. Deane and Lucy.*]

The well-furnished drawing-room, with the open grand piano, and the pleasant outlook down a sloping

garden to a boathouse by the side of the Floss, is Mr. Deane's. The neat little lady in mourning, whose light-brown ringlets are falling over the coloured embroidery with which her fingers are busy, is of course Lucy Deane; and the fine young man who is leaning down from his chair to snap the scissors in the extremely abbreviated face of the "King Charles" lying on the young lady's feet, is no other than Mr. Stephen Guest, whose diamond ring, attar of roses, and air of nonchalant leisure, at twelve o'clock in the day, are the graceful and odoriferous result of the largest oil-mill and the most extensive wharf in St. Ogg's.

* * * * *

"What! is your cousin coming to stay with you?" said Stephen, with a look of slight annoyance.

"Yes; that was my news, which you have forgotten. She's going to leave her situation, where she has been nearly two years, poor thing—ever since her father's death; and she will stay with me a month or two—many months, I hope."

"And am I bound to be pleased at that news?"

"Oh no, not at all," said Lucy, with a little air of pique. "*I* am pleased, but that, of course, is no reason why *you* should be pleased. There is no girl in the world I love so well as my cousin Maggie."

"And you will be inseparable, I suppose, when she comes. There will be no possibility of a *tête-à-tête* with you any more, unless you can find an admirer for her, who will pair off with her occasionally. What is the ground of dislike to Philip? He might have been a resource."

* * * * *

Stephen mastered the little hand that was straying towards the table, and touched it lightly with his lips.

Little Lucy felt very proud and happy. She and Stephen were in that stage of courtship which makes the most exquisite moment of youth, the freshest blossom-time of passion—when each are sure of the other's love, but no formal declaration has been made, and all is mutual divination, exalting the most trivial word, the slightest gesture, into thrills delicate and delicious as wafted jasmine scent.

[*When Stephen Guest calls again Maggie has arrived.*]

Did Lucy intend to be present at the meeting of the Book Club next week ? was the next question. Then followed the recommendation to choose Southey's *Life of Cowper*, unless she were inclined to be philosophical, and startle the ladies of St. Ogg's by voting for one of the Bridgewater Treatises. Of course Lucy wished to know what these alarmingly learned books were ; and as it is always pleasant to improve the minds of ladies by talking to them at ease on subjects of which they know nothing, Stephen became quite brilliant in an account of Buckland's Treatise, which he had just been reading. He was rewarded by seeing Maggie let her work fall, and gradually get so absorbed in his wonderful geological story that she sat looking at him, leaning forward with crossed arms, and with an entire absence of self-consciousness, as if he had been the snuffiest of old professors, and she a downy-lipped alumnus. He was so fascinated by this clear, large gaze, that at last he forgot to look away from it occasionally towards Lucy ; but she, sweet child, was only rejoicing that Stephen was proving to Maggie how clever he was, and that they would certainly be good friends after all.

" I will bring you the book, shall I, Miss Tulliver ? "

said Stephen, when he found the stream of his recollections running rather shallow. " There are many illustrations in it that you will like to see."

" Oh, thank you," said Maggie, blushing with returning self-consciousness at this direct address, and taking up her work again.

[*They spend the evening singing, and later Lucy comes to Maggie's bedroom.*]

" We shall have more music to-morrow evening," said Lucy, looking happy already, " for Stephen will bring Philip Wakem with him."

" Oh, Lucy, I can't see him," said Maggie, turning pale. " At least, I could not see him without Tom's leave." . . .

" Maggie, you have secrets from me, and I have none from you."

Maggie looked meditatively away from Lucy. Then she turned to her and said, " I *should* like to tell you about Philip. But, Lucy, you must not betray that you know it to anyone—least of all to Philip himself, or to Mr. Stephen Guest."

* * * * *

She mused a little with her eyes downward, and then added, looking at Maggie, " It is very beautiful that you should love Philip : I never thought such a happiness would befall him. And in my opinion, you ought not to give him up. There are obstacles now ; but they may be done away with in time."

Maggie shook her head.

" Yes, yes," persisted Lucy ; " I can't help being hopeful about it. There's something romantic in it —out of the common way—just what everything that happens to you ought to be. And Philip will

adore you like a husband in a fairy-tale. Oh, I shall puzzle my small brain to contrive some plot that will bring everybody into the right mind, so that you may marry Philip, when I marry—somebody else. Wouldn't that be a pretty ending to all my poor, poor Maggie's troubles ? "

Maggie tried to smile, but shivered, as if she felt a sudden chill.

[*Maggie goes to Tom's lodging.*]

" I must tell you at once what I came about, else I shall be hindering you from taking your dinner."

Tom stood with his back against the chimney-piece, and Maggie was seated opposite the light. He noticed that she was tremulous, and he had a presentiment of the subject she was going to speak about. The presentiment made his voice colder and harder as he said, " What is it ? "

This tone roused a spirit of resistance in Maggie, and she put her request in quite a different form from the one she had predetermined on. She rose from her seat, and, looking straight at Tom, said—

" I want you to absolve me from my promise about Philip Wakem. Or rather, I promised you not to see him without telling you. I am come to tell you that I wish to see him."

" Very well," said Tom, still more coldly.

But Maggie had hardly finished speaking in that chill, defiant manner, before she repented, and felt the dread of alienation from her brother.

" Not for myself, dear Tom. Don't be angry. I shouldn't have asked it, only that Philip, you know, is a friend of Lucy's, and she wishes him to come—has invited him to come this evening ; and I told

her I couldn't see him without telling you. I shall only see him in the presence of other people. There will never be anything secret between us again."

Tom looked away from Maggie, knitting his brow more strongly for a little while. Then he turned to her and said, slowly and emphatically—

"You know what is my feeling on that subject, Maggie. There is no need for my repeating anything I said a year ago. While my father was living, I felt bound to use the utmost power over you, to prevent you from disgracing him as well as yourself, and all of us. But now I must leave you to your own choice. You wish to be independent—you told me so after my father's death. My opinion is not changed. If you think of Philip Wakem as a lover again, you must give up me."

"I don't wish it, dear Tom—at least as things are: I see that it would lead to misery. But I shall soon go away to another situation, and I should like to be friends with him again while I am here. Lucy wishes it."

The severity of Tom's face relaxed a little.

"I shouldn't mind your seeing him occasionally at my uncle's—I don't want you to make a fuss on the subject. But I have no confidence in you, Maggie. You would be led away to do anything."

That was a cruel word. Maggie's lips began to tremble.

"Why will you say that, Tom? It is very hard of you. Have I not done and borne everything as well as I could? And I have kept my word to you —when—when . . . My life has not been a happy one, any more than yours." . . . .

"Now listen to me, Maggie. I'll tell you what I mean. You're always in extremes—you have no

judgment and self-command ; and yet you think you know best, and will not submit to be guided. You know I didn't wish you to take a situation. My aunt Pullet was willing to give you a good home, and you might have lived respectably amongst your relations, until I could have provided a home for you with my mother. And that is what I should like to do. I wished my sister to be a lady, and I would always have taken care of you, as my father desired, until you were well married. But your ideas and mine never accord, and you will not give way." . . .

" Yes—I know—dear Tom," said Maggie, still half-sobbing, but trying to control her tears. " I know you would do a great deal for me : I know how you work, and don't spare yourself. I am grateful to you. But, indeed, you can't quite judge for me—our natures are very different. You don't know how differently things affect me from what they do you."

" Yes, I *do* know : I know it too well. . . . With any one but you, I should think it quite certain that what you witnessed just before my father's death would secure you from ever thinking again of Philip Wakem as a lover. But I don't feel certain of it with you—I never feel certain about anything with *you*. At one time you take pleasure in a sort of perverse self-denial, and at another you have not resolution to resist a thing that you know to be wrong."

There was a terrible cutting truth in Tom's words —that hard rind of truth which is discerned by unimaginative, unsympathetic minds. Maggie always writhed under this judgment of Tom's : she rebelled and was humiliated in the same moment : it seemed as if he held a glass before her to show her her own folly and weakness—as if he were a prophetic voice predicting her future fallings—and yet, all the while,

she judged him in return : she said inwardly that he was narrow and unjust, that he was below feeling those mental needs which were often the source of the wrong-doing or absurdity that made her life a planless riddle to him.

[*Maggie leads a pleasant life.*]

Under the charm of her new pleasures, Maggie herself was ceasing to think, with her eager prefiguring imagination, of her future lot ; and her anxiety about her first interview with Philip was losing its predominance : perhaps, unconsciously to herself, she was not sorry that the interview had been deferred.

For Philip had not come the evening he was expected, and Mr. Stephen Guest brought word that he was gone to the coast—probably, he thought, on a sketching expedition ; but it was not certain when he would return.

[*Stephen is a frequent visitor.*]

If Stephen came in when Lucy was out of the room —if Lucy left them together, they never spoke to each other : Stephen, perhaps, seemed to be examining books on music, and Maggie bent her head assiduously over her work. Each was oppressively conscious of the other's presence, even to the finger-ends. Yet each looked and longed for the same thing to happen the next day. Neither of them had begun to reflect on the matter, or silently to ask, " To what does all this tend ? " Maggie only felt that life was revealing something quite new to her ; and she was absorbed in the direct, immediate experience, without any energy left for taking account of it and reasoning

about it. Stephen wilfully abstained from self-questioning, and would not admit to himself that he felt an influence which was to have any determining effect on his conduct. And when Lucy came into the room again, they were once more unconstrained: Maggie could contradict Stephen, and laugh at him, and he could recommend to her consideration the example of that most charming heroine, Miss Sophia Western, who had a great "respect for the understandings of men." Maggie could look at Stephen —which, for some reason or other, she always avoided when they were alone; and he could even ask her to play his accompaniment for him, since Lucy's fingers were so busy with that bazaar-work; and lecture her on hurrying the *tempo*, which was certainly Maggie's weak point.

One day—it was the day of Philip's return—Lucy had formed a sudden engagement to spend the evening with Mrs. Kenn, whose delicate state of health, threatening to become confirmed illness through an attack of bronchitis, obliged her to resign her functions at the coming bazaar into the hands of other ladies, of whom she wished Lucy to be one. The engagement had been formed in Stephen's presence. . . . .

* * * * *

Maggie was seated in the drawing-room alone, shortly after dinner, with Minny on her lap, having left her uncle to his wine and his nap, and her mother to the compromise between knitting and nodding, which, when there was no company, she always carried on in the dining-room till tea-time. Maggie was stooping to caress the tiny silken pet, and comforting him for his mistress's absence, when the sound of a footstep on the gravel made her look up, and she saw Mr. Stephen Guest walking up the garden. . . .

"You are surprised to see me again, Miss Tulliver —I ought to apologise for coming upon you by surprise, but I wanted to come into the town, and I got our man to row me; so I thought I would bring these things from the *Maid of Artois* for your cousin: I forgot them this morning. Will you give them to her?"

"Yes," said Maggie, who had risen confusedly with Minny in her arms, and now, not quite knowing what else to do, sat down again.

Stephen laid down his hat, with the music, which rolled on the floor, and sat down in the chair close by her. He had never done so before, and both he and Maggie were quite aware that it was an entirely new position.

"Well, you pampered minion!" said Stephen, leaning to pull the long curly ears that drooped over Maggie's arm. It was not a suggestive remark, and as the speaker did not follow it up by further development, it naturally left the conversation at a standstill. It seemed to Stephen like some action in a dream, that he was obliged to do, and wonder at himself all the while—to go on stroking Minny's head. Yet it was very pleasant: he only wished he dared look at Maggie, and that she would look at him—let him have one long look into those deep strange eyes of hers, and then he would be satisfied, and quite reasonable after that. He thought it was becoming a sort of monomania with him, to want that long look from Maggie; and he was racking his invention continually to find out some means by which he could have it without its appearing singular and entailing subsequent embarrassment. As for Maggie, she had no distinct thought—only the sense of a presence like that of a closely-hovering, broad-winged bird in the

darkness, for she was unable to look up, and saw nothing but Minny's black wavy coat.

But this must end sometime—perhaps it ended very soon, and only *seemed* long, as a minute's dream does. Stephen at last sat upright sideways in his chair, leaning one hand and arm over the back and looking at Maggie. What should he say?

"We shall have a splendid sunset, I think; shan't you go out and see it?"

"I don't know," said Maggie. Then, courageously raising her eyes and looking out of the window, "If I'm not playing cribbage with my uncle."

A pause: during which Minny is stroked again, but has sufficient insight not to be grateful for it—to growl rather.

"Do you like sitting alone?"

A rather arch look came over Maggie's face, and, just glancing at Stephen, she said, "Would it be quite civil to say 'yes'?"

"It *was* rather a dangerous question for an intruder to ask," said Stephen, delighted with that glance, and getting determined to stay for another. "But you will have more than half an hour to yourself after I am gone," he added, taking out his watch. I know Mr. Deane never comes in till half-past seven."

Another pause, during which Maggie looked steadily out of the window, till by a great effort she moved her head to look down at Minny's back again, and said—

"I wish Lucy had not been obliged to go out. We lose our music."

"We shall have a new voice to-morrow night," said Stephen. "Will you tell your cousin that our friend Philip Wakem is come back? I saw him as I went home."

Maggie gave a little start—it seemed hardly more

than a vibration that passed from head to foot in an instant. But the new images summoned by Philip's name dispersed half the oppressive spell she had been under. She rose from her chair with a sudden resolution, and, laying Minny on his cushion, went to reach Lucy's large work-basket from its corner.

* * * * *

"Good-bye," said Stephen, in a tone that had the same beseeching discontent as his eyes. He dared not put out his hand—he thrust both hands into his tail-pockets as he spoke. Maggie thought she had perhaps been rude.

"Won't you stay?" she said timidly, not looking away, for that would have seemed rude again.

"No, thank you," said Stephen, looking still into the half-unwilling, half-fascinated eyes, as a thirsty man looks towards the track of the distant brook. "The boat is waiting for me. . . . You'll tell your cousin?"

"Yes."

"That I brought the music, I mean?"

"Yes."

"And that Philip is come back?"

"Yes." (Maggie did not notice Philip's name this time.)

"Won't you come out a little way into the garden?" said Stephen, in a still gentler tone; but the next moment he was vexed that she did not say "No," for she moved away towards the open window, and he was obliged to take his hat and walk by her side. But he thought of something to make him amends.

"Do take my arm," he said, in a low tone, as if it were a secret.

There is something strangely winning to most

women in that offer of the firm arm : the help is not wanted physically at that moment, but the sense of help—the presence of strength that is outside them and yet theirs—meets a continual want of the imagination. Either on that ground or some other, Maggie took the arm. And they walked together round the grass-plot and under the drooping green of the laburnums, in the same dim dreamy state as they had been in a quarter of an hour before ; only that Stephen had had the look he longed for, without yet perceiving in himself the symptoms of returning reasonableness, and Maggie had darting thoughts across the dimness :—how came she to be there ?—why had she come out ? Not a word was spoken. If it had been, each would have been less intensely conscious of the other.

" Take care of this step," said Stephen at last.

" Oh, I will go in now," said Maggie, feeling that the step had come like a rescue. " Good-evening."

In an instant she had withdrawn her arm, and was running back to the house. She did not reflect that this sudden action would only add to the embarrassing recollection of the last half-hour. She had no thought left for that. She only threw herself into the low arm-chair, and burst into tears.

" Oh Philip, Philip, I wish we were together again —so quietly—in the Red Deeps."

[*Philip comes.*]

" Then we can at least be friends, Maggie ? There is nothing to hinder that now ? "

" Will not your father object ? " said Maggie, withdrawing her hand.

" I should not give you up on any ground but your

own wish, Maggie," said Philip, colouring. "There are points on which I should always resist my father, as I used to tell you. *That* is one."

"Then there is nothing to hinder our being friends, Philip—seeing each other and talking to each other while I am here: I shall soon go away again. I mean to go very soon—to a new situation."

"Is that inevitable, Maggie?"

"Yes: I must not stay here long. It would unfit me for the life I must begin again at last. I can't live in dependence—I can't live with my brother—though he is very good to me. He would like to provide for me; but that would be intolerable to me."

Philip was silent a few moments, and then said, in that high, feeble voice which with him indicated the resolute suppression of emotion—

"Is there no other alternative, Maggie? Is that life, away from those who love you, the only one you will allow yourself to look forward to?"

"Yes, Philip," she said, looking at him pleadingly, as if she entreated him to believe that she was compelled to this course. "At least, as things are; I don't know what may be in years to come. But I begin to think there can never come much happiness to me from loving: I have always had so much pain mingled with it. I wish I could make myself a world outside of it, as men do."

"Now you are returning to your old thought in a new form, Maggie—the thought I used to combat," said Philip, with a slight tinge of bitterness. "You want to find out a mode of renunciation that will be an escape from pain. I tell you again, there is no such escape possible except by perverting or mutilating one's nature. What would become of me, if I tried to escape from pain? Scorn and cynicism

would be my only opium ; unless I could fall into some kind of conceited madness, and fancy myself a favourite of Heaven because I am not a favourite with men."

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[*Mr. Wakem agrees to sell the Mill to Guest and Co., and Tom and his mother are to live there.*

There is a dance at Park House, the home of the Guests.]

" How strange and unreal the trees and flowers look with the lights among them ! " said Maggie, in a low voice. " They look as if they belonged to an enchanted land, and would never fade away—I could fancy they were all made of jewels."

She was looking at the tier of geraniums as she spoke, and Stephen made no answer : but he was looking at her—and does not a supreme poet blend light and sound into one, calling darkness mute, and light eloquent ? Something strangely powerful there was in the light of Stephen's long gaze, for it made Maggie's face turn towards it and look upward at it—slowly, like a flower at the ascending brightness. And they walked unsteadily on, without feeling that they were walking—without feeling anything but that long, grave, mutual gaze which has the solemnity belonging to all deep human passion. The hovering thought that they must and would renounce each other made this moment of mute confession more intense in its rapture.

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A mad impulse seized on Stephen ; he darted towards the arm, and showered kisses on it, clasping the wrist.

But the next moment Maggie snatched it from him, and glared at him like a wounded war-goddess, quivering with rage and humiliation.

" How dare you ? "—she spoke in a deeply shaken, half-smothered voice. " What right have I given you to insult me ? . . . .

As for Stephen, he leaned back against the framework of the conservatory, dizzy with the conflict of passions—love, rage, and confused despair : despair at his want of self-mastery, and despair that he had offended Maggie. . . .

She re-entered the drawing-room still with some excited brightness in her face, but with a sense of proud self-command that defied anything to agitate her. She refused to dance again, but she talked quite readily and calmly with everyone who addressed her. And when they got home that night, she kissed Lucy with a free heart, almost exulting in this scorching moment, which had delivered her from the possibility of another word or look that would have the stamp of treachery towards that gentle, unsuspicious sister.

[*The next morning Philip visits her.*]

" I remember all the spots," she said, " just where you told me of particular things—beautiful stories that I had never heard of before."

" You will go there again soon—won't you, Maggie ? said Philip, getting timid. " The mill will soon be your brother's home again."

" Yes ; but I shall not be there," said Maggie. " I shall only hear of that happiness. I am going away again—Lucy has not told you, perhaps ? "

"Then the future will never join on to the past again, Maggie? That book is quite closed?"

The gray eyes that had so often looked up at her with entreating worship, looked up at her now, with a last struggling ray of hope in them, and Maggie met them with her large sincere gaze.

"That book never will be closed, Philip," she said, with grave sadness; "I desire no future that will break the ties of the past. But the tie to my brother is one of the strongest. I can do nothing willingly that will divide me always from him."

"Is that the only reason that would keep us apart for ever, Maggie?" said Philip, with a desperate determination to have a definite answer.

"The only reason," said Maggie, with calm decision. And she believed it.

[*Maggie leaves the Deanes and goes to stay with her Aunt Moss. Stephen comes there.*]

"There is no need for me to go any farther. I don't know whether you consider it gentlemanly and delicate conduct to place me in a position that forced me to come out with you—or whether you wished to insult me still further by thrusting an interview upon me in this way."

"Of course you are angry with me for coming," said Stephen bitterly. "Of course it is of no consequence what a man has to suffer—it is only your woman's dignity that you care about."

Maggie gave a slight start, such as might have come from the slightest possible electric shock.

"As if it were not enough that I'm entangled in this way—that I'm mad with love for you—that I resist the strongest passion a man can feel, because

I try to be true to other claims—but you must treat me as if I were a coarse brute, who would willingly offend you. And when, if I had my own choice, I should ask you to take my hand, and my fortune, and my whole life, and do what you like with them! I know I forgot myself. I took an unwarrantable liberty. I hate myself for having done it. But I repented immediately — I've been repenting ever since. You ought not to think it unpardonable: a man who loves with his whole soul, as I do you, is liable to be mastered by his feelings for a moment; but you know—you must believe—that the worst pain I could have is to have pained you—that I would give the world to recall the error." . . .

"You must not say these things—I must not hear them," she said, looking down in misery, as Stephen came in front of her, to prevent her from going farther towards the gate. "I'm very sorry for any pain you have to go through; but it is of no use to speak."

"Yes, it *is* of use," said Stephen impetuously. "It would be of use if you would treat me with some sort of pity and consideration, instead of doing me vile injustice in your mind. I could bear everything more quietly if I knew you didn't hate me for an insolent coxcomb. Look at me—see what a hunted being I am: I've been riding thirty miles every day to get away from the thought of you."

Maggie did not—dared not look. She had already seen the harassed face. But she said gently—

"I don't think any evil of you."

"Then, dearest, look at me," said Stephen, in deepest, tenderest tones of entreaty. "Don't go away from me yet. Give me a moment's happiness —make me feel you've forgiven me."

"Yes, I do forgive you," said Maggie, shaken by

those tones, and all the more frightened at herself. "But pray let me go in again. Pray go away."

A great tear fell from under her lowered eyelids.

* * * * *

"Many things are difficult and dark to me; but I see one thing quite clearly—that I must not, cannot, seek my own happiness by sacrificing others. Love is natural; but surely pity and faithfulness and memory are natural too. And they would live in me still, and punish me if I did not obey them. I should be haunted by the suffering I had caused. Our love would be poisoned. Don't urge me; help me—help me, *because* I love you."

Maggie had become more and more earnest as she went on; her face had become flushed, and her eyes fuller and fuller of appealing love. Stephen had the fibre of nobleness in him that vibrated to her appeal: but in the same moment—how could it be otherwise?—that pleading beauty gained new power over him.

"Dearest," he said, in scarcely more than a whisper, while his arm stole round her, "I'll do, I'll bear anything you wish. But—one kiss—one—the last—before we part."

One kiss—and then a long look—until Maggie said tremulously, "Let me go—let us make haste back."

[*Maggie visits her Uncle and Aunt Glegg.*]

"Hegh, hegh!" said Mr. Glegg, good-naturedly patting Maggie on the back, "nonsense, nonsense! Don't let us hear of you taking a place again, Maggie. Why, you must ha' picked up half a dozen sweethearts at the bazaar: isn't there one of 'em the right sort of article? Come, now?"

" Mr. Glegg," said his wife, with that shade of increased politeness in her severity which she always put on with her crisper fronts, " you'll excuse me, but you'll far too light for a man of your years. It's respect and duty to her aunts, and the rest of her kin as are so good to her, should have kept my niece from fixing about going away again without consulting us —not sweethearts, if I'm to use such a word, though it was niver heared in *my* family."

" Why, what did they call us, when we went to see 'em, then, eh, neighbour Pullet ? They thought us sweet enough then," said Mr. Glegg, winking pleasantly, while Mr. Pullet, at the suggestion of sweetness, took a little more sugar.

" Mr. Glegg," said Mrs. G., " if you're going to be undelicate, let me know."

" La, Jane, your husband's only joking," said Mrs. Pullet ; " let him joke while's he's got health and strength. There's poor Mr. Tilt got his mouth drawn all o' one side, and couldn't laugh if he was to try."

[*Maggie returns to the Deanes'. There has been a plan for an expedition in the boat, but it chances that Stephen finds Maggie alone.*]

" Oh, we can't go," said Maggie, sinking into her chair again. " Lucy did not expect—she would be hurt. Why is not Philip come ? "

" He is not well ; he asked me to come instead."

" Lucy is gone to Lindum," said Maggie, taking off her bonnet, with hurried, trembling fingers. " We must not go."

" Very well," said Stephen dreamily, looking at her, as he rested his arm on the back of his chair. " Then we'll stay here."

He was looking into her deep, deep eyes—far off and mysterious as the starlit blackness, and yet very near, and timidly loving. Maggie sat perfectly still —perhaps for moments, perhaps for minutes—until the helpless trembling had ceased, and there was a warm glow on her cheek.

"The man is waiting—he has taken the cushions," she said. "Will you go and tell him?"

"What shall I tell him?" said Stephen, almost in a whisper. He was looking at the lips now.

Maggie made no answer.

"Let us go," Stephen murmured entreatingly, rising, and taking her hand to raise her too. "We shall not be long together."

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But at last Stephen, who had been rowing more and more idly, ceased to row, laid down the oars, folded his arms, and looked down on the water as if watching the pace at which the boat glided without his help. This sudden change roused Maggie. She looked at the far-stretching fields—at the banks close by—and felt that they were entirely strange to her. A terrible alarm took possession of her.

"Oh, have we passed Luckreth—where we were to stop?" she exclaimed, looking back to see if the place were out of sight. No village was to be seen. She turned round again, with a look of distressed questioning at Stephen.

He went on watching the water, and said, in a strange, dreamy, absent tone, "Yes—a long way."

"Oh, what shall I do?" cried Maggie, in an agony. "We shall not get home for hours—and Lucy—O God, help me!"

She clasped her hands and broke into a sob, like a

frightened child : she thought of nothing but of meeting Lucy, and seeing her look of pained surprise and doubt—perhaps of just upbraiding.

Stephen moved and sat near her, and gently drew down the clasped hands.

" Maggie," he said, in a deep tone of slow decision, " let us never go home again—till no one can part us —till we are married."

The unusual tone, the startling words, arrested Maggie's sob, and she sat quite still—wondering : as if Stephen might have seen some possibilities that would alter everything, and annul the wretched facts.

" See, Maggie, how everything has come without our seeking—in spite of all our efforts. We never thought of being alone together again : it has all been done by others. See how the tide is carrying us out —away from all those unnatural bonds that we have been trying to make faster round us—and trying in vain. It will carry us on to Torby, and we can land there, and get some carriage, and hurry on to York and then to Scotland—and never pause a moment till we are bound to each other, so that only death can part us. It is the only right thing, dearest : it is the only way of escaping from this wretched entanglement. Everything has concurred to point it out to us. We have contrived nothing, we have thought of nothing ourselves." . . .

" Let me go ! " she said, in an agitated tone, flashing an indignant look at him, and trying to get her hands free. " You have wanted to deprive me of any choice. You knew we were come too far—you have dared to take advantage of my thoughtlessness. It is unmanly to bring me into such a position."

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"You will be chill, Maggie, in this thin dress. Let me raise the cloak over your shoulders. Get up an instant, dearest."

Maggie obeyed: there was an unspeakable charm in being told what to do, and having everything decided for her. She sat down again covered with the cloak, and Stephen took to his oars again, making haste; for they must try to get to Torby as fast as they could. Maggie was hardly conscious of having said or done anything decisive. All yielding is attended with a less vivid consciousness than resistance; it is the partial sleep of thought; it is the submergence of our own personality by another. . . .

Presently Stephen observed a vessel coming after them. Several vessels, among them the steamer to Mudport, had passed them with the early tide, but for the last hour they had seen none. He looked more and more eagerly at this vessel, as if a new thought had come into his mind along with it, and then he looked at Maggie hesitatingly.

"Maggie, dearest," he said at last, "if this vessel should be going to Mudport, or to any convenient place on the coast northward, it would be our best plan to get them to take us on board. You are fatigued—and it may soon rain—it may be a wretched business, getting to Torby in this boat. It's only a trading-vessel, but I daresay you can be made tolerably comfortable." . . .

There was to be no rain, after all; the clouds rolled off to the horizon again, making the great purple rampart and long purple isles of that wondrous land which reveals itself to us when the sun goes down—the land that the evening star watches over. Maggie was to sleep all night on the poop; it was better than going below; and she was covered with the warmest

wrappings the ship could furnish. It was still early, when the fatigues of the day brought on a drowsy longing for perfect rest, and she laid down her head, looking at the faint dying flush in the west, where the one golden lamp was getting brighter and brighter. Then she looked up at Stephen, who was still seated by her, hanging over her as he leaned his arm against the vessel's side. Behind all the delicious visions of these last hours, which had flowed over her like a soft stream, and made her entirely passive, there was the dim consciousness that the condition was a transient one, and that the morrow must bring back the old life of struggle—that there were thoughts which would presently avenge themselves for this oblivion. But now nothing was distinct to her: she was being lulled to sleep with that soft stream still flowing over her, with those delicious visions melting and fading like the wondrous aërial land of the west.

[*The next morning.*]

And so they drank their cup of coffee together, and walked about the deck, and heard the captain's assurance that they should be in at Mudport by five o'clock, each with an inward burthen; but in him it was an undefined fear, which he trusted to the coming hours to dissipate; in her it was a definite resolve on which she was trying silently to tighten her hold. Stephen was continually, through the morning, expressing his anxiety at the fatigue and discomfort she was suffering, and alluded to landing and to the change of motion and repose she would have in a carriage, wanting to assure himself more completely by presupposing that everything would be as he had arranged it. For a long while Maggie

contented herself with assuring him that she had had a good night's rest, and that she didn't mind about being on the vessel—it was not like being on the open sea—it was only a little less pleasant than being in a boat on the Floss. But a suppressed resolve will betray itself in the eyes, and Stephen became more and more uneasy as the day advanced, under the sense that Maggie had entirely lost her passiveness. . . .

Maggie felt it was time to speak: it would only be unkind now to assent by silence. She spoke in the lowest tone, as he had done, but with distinct decision.

"We shall not be together—we shall have parted."

The blood rushed to Stephen's face.

"We shall not," he said. "I'll die first."

[*They go to a posting-house, but Maggie insists that she will not go on. Stephen still tries to prevail with her, and Maggie says:*]

"Faithfulness and constancy mean something else besides doing what is easiest and pleasantest to ourselves. They mean renouncing whatever is opposed to the reliance others have in us—whatever would cause misery to those whom the course of our lives has made dependent on us. If we—if I had been better, nobler, those claims would have been so strongly present with me—I should have felt them pressing on my heart so continually, just as they do now in the moments when my conscience is awake—that the opposite feeling would never have grown in me, as it has done: it would have been quenched at once—I should have prayed for help so earnestly—I should have rushed away as we rush from hideous danger. I feel no excuse for myself—none. I should never

have failed towards Lucy and Philip as I have done, if I had not been weak, selfish, and hard—able to think of their pain without a pain to myself that would have destroyed all temptation. Oh, what is Lucy feeling now? She believed in me—she loved me —she was so good to me. Think of her——"

Maggie's voice was getting choked as she uttered these last words. . . .

Stephen loosed her hand, and, rising impatiently, walked up and down the room in suppressed rage.

"Good God!" he burst out, at last, "what a miserable thing a woman's love is to a man's! I could commit crimes for you—and you can balance and choose in that way. But you *don't* love me: if you had a tithe of the feeling for me that I have for you, it would be impossible to you to think for a moment of sacrificing me. But it weighs nothing with you that you are robbing me of *my* life's happiness."

Maggie pressed her fingers together almost convulsively as she held them clasped on her lap. A great terror was upon her, as if she were ever and anon seeing where she stood by great flashes of lightning, and then again stretched forth her hands in the darkness. . . .

"Good God, Maggie!" said Stephen, rising too and grasping her arm, "you rave. How can you go back without marrying me? You don't know what will be said, dearest. You see nothing as it really is."

"Yes, I do. But they will believe me. I will confess everything. Lucy will believe me—she will forgive you, and—and—oh, *some* good will come by clinging to the right. Dear, dear Stephen, let me go! —don't drag me into deeper remorse. My whole soul has never consented—it does not consent now."

Stephen let go her arm, and sank back on his chair, half stunned by despairing rage. He was silent a few moments, not looking at her ; while her eyes were turned towards him yearningly, in alarm at this sudden change. At last he said, still without looking at her—

" Go, then—leave me—don't torture me any longer —I can't bear it."

Involuntarily she leaned towards him and put out her hand to touch his. But he shrank from it as if it had been burning iron, and said again—

" Leave me."

Maggie was not conscious of a decision as she turned away from that gloomy averted face, and walked out of the room : it was like an automatic action that fulfils a forgotten intention. What came after ? A sense of stairs descended as if in a dream—of flagstones—of a chaise and horses standing—then a street, and a turning into another street where a stage-coach was standing, taking in passengers—and the darting thought that that coach would take her away, perhaps towards home. But she could ask nothing yet ; she only got into the coach.

[*Though Tom is now established at the Mill, he has no gladness.*]

No news of his sister had been heard since Bob Jakin had come back in the steamer from Mudport, and put an end to all improbable suppositions of an accident on the water by stating that he had seen her land from a vessel with Mr. Stephen Guest. Would the next news be that she was married—or what ? Probably that she was not married : Tom's mind was set to the expectation of the worst that could happen, not death, but disgrace.

As he was walking with his back towards the entrance gate, and his face towards the rushing mill-stream, a tall, dark-eyed figure, that we know well, approached the gate, and paused to look at him, with a fast-beating heart. Her brother was the human being of whom she had been most afraid, from her childhood upwards: afraid with that fear which springs in us when we love one who is inexorable, unbending, unmodifiable—with a mind that we can never mould ourselves upon, and yet that we cannot endure to alienate from us. That deep-rooted fear was shaking Maggie now; but her mind was unswervingly bent on returning to her brother, as the natural refuge that had been given her. In her deep humiliaton under the retrospect of her own weakness—in her anguish at the injury she had inflicted—she almost desired to endure the severity of Tom's reproof, to submit in patient silence to that harsh disapproving judgment against which she had so often rebelled: it seemed no more than just to her now—who was weaker than she was? . . .

She lifted the latch of the gate and walked in—slowly. Tom did not hear the gate; he was just then close upon the roaring dam: but he presently turned, and, lifting up his eyes, saw the figure whose worn look and loneliness seemed to him a confirmation of his worst conjectures. He paused, trembling and white with disgust and indignation.

Maggie paused too—three yards before him. She felt the hatred in his face: felt it rushing through her fibres; but she must speak.

"Tom," she began faintly, "I am come back to you—I am come back home—for refuge—to tell you everything."

"You will find no home with me," he answered,

with tremulous rage. "You have disgraced us all. You have disgraced my father's name. You have been a curse to your best friends. You have been base—deceitful; no motives are strong enough to restrain you. I wash my hands of you for ever. You don't belong to me."

Their mother had come to the door now. She stood paralysed by the double shock of seeing Maggie and hearing Tom's words.

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"Tom," she said, crushing her hands together under her cloak, in an effort to speak again, "whatever I have done, I repent it bitterly. I want to make amends. I will endure anything. I want to be kept from doing wrong again."

"What *will* keep you?" said Tom, with cruel bitterness. "Not religion: not your natural feelings of gratitude and honour. And he—he would deserve to be shot, if it were not—— But you are ten times worse than he is. I loathe your character and your conduct. You struggled with your feelings, you say. Yes! *I* have had feelings to struggle with; but I conquered them. I have had a harder life than you have had; but I have found *my* comfort in doing my duty. But I will sanction no such character as yours: the world shall know that *I* feel the difference between right and wrong. If you are in want, I will provide for you—let my mother know. But you shall not come under my roof. It is enough that I have to bear the thought of your disgrace: the sight of you is hateful to me."

Slowly Maggie was turning away with despair in her heart. But the poor frightened mother's love leaped out now, stronger than all dread.

"My child! I'll go with you. You've got a mother."

Oh, the sweet rest of that embrace to the heart-stricken Maggie! More helpful than all wisdom is one draught of simple human pity that will not forsake us.

[*They go to a lodging.*
Lucy is prostrate with grief. Nothing is seen of Philip. Stephen writes to his father an account of what happened. At last a letter comes to Maggie from Philip.]

"MAGGIE,—I believe in you—I know you never meant to deceive me—I know you tried to keep faith to me, and to all. I believed this before I had any other evidence of it than your own nature. The night after I last parted from you I suffered torments. I had seen what convinced me that you were not free; that there was another whose presence had a power over you which mine never possessed; but through all the suggestions—almost murderous suggestions—of rage and jealousy, my mind made its way to believe in your truthfulness. . . .

"But the miseries of that night had prepared me for what came before the next. It was no surprise to me. I was certain that he had prevailed on you to sacrifice everything to him, and I waited with equal certainty to hear of your marriage. I measured your love and his by my own. But I was wrong, Maggie. There is something stronger in you than your love for him.

"I will not tell you what I went through in that interval. But even in its utmost agony—even in those terrible throes that love must suffer before it can be disembodied of selfish desire—my love for you sufficed to withhold me from suicide, without the aid of any

other motive. In the midst of my egoism, I yet could not bear to come like a death-shadow across the feast of your joy. I could not bear to forsake the world in which you still lived and might need me; it was part of the faith I had vowed to you—to wait and endure. Maggie, that is a proof of what I write now to assure you of—that no anguish I have had to bear on your account has been too heavy a price to pay for the new life into which I have entered in loving you. I want you to put aside all grief because of the grief you have caused me. I was nurtured in the sense of privation; I never expected happiness; and in knowing you, in loving you, I have had, and still have, what reconciles me to life. . . .

"God comfort you—my loving, large-souled Maggie. If everyone else had misconceived you, remember that you have never been doubted by him whose heart recognised you ten years ago.

"Do not believe anyone who says I am ill, because I am not seen out of doors. I have only had nervous headaches—no worse than I have sometimes had them before. But the overpowering heat inclines me to be perfectly quiescent in the daytime. I am strong enough to obey any word which shall tell me that I can serve you by word or deed.—Yours to the last, PHILIP WAKEM."

As Maggie knelt by the bed, sobbing, with that letter pressed under her, her feelings again and again gathered themselves in a whispered cry, always in the same words—

"O God, is there any happiness in love that could make me forget *their* pain?"

[*Lucy comes to Maggie's lodging.*]

"Maggie!" the soft voice said. "Lucy!" answered a voice with a sharp ring of anguish in it; and Lucy threw her arms round Maggie's neck, and leaned her pale cheek against the burning brow.

"I stole out," said Lucy, almost in a whisper, while she sat down close to Maggie and held her hand, "when papa and the rest were away. Alice is come with me. I asked her to help me. But I must only stay a little while, because it is so late." . . .

"God bless you for coming, Lucy."

The sobs came thick on each other after that.

"Maggie, dear, be comforted," said Lucy now, putting her cheek against Maggie's again. "Don't grieve." And she sat still, hoping to soothe Maggie with that gentle caress.

"I didn't mean to deceive you, Lucy," said Maggie, as soon as she could speak. "It always made me wretched that I felt what I didn't like you to know. . . . It was because I thought it would all be conquered, and you might never see anything to wound you."

"I know, dear," said Lucy. "I know you never meant to make me unhappy. . . . It is a trouble that has come on us all: you have more to bear than I have—and you gave him up, when . . . you did what it must have been very hard to do."

They were silent again a little while, sitting with clasped hands, and cheeks leaned together.

"Lucy," Maggie began again, "*he* struggled too. He wanted to be true to you. He will come back to you. Forgive him—he will be happy then——"

These words were wrung forth from Maggie's

deepest soul, with an effort like the convulsed clutch of a drowning man. Lucy trembled and was silent. . . .

"Lucy," said Maggie, with another great effort, "I pray to God continually that I may never be the cause of sorrow to you any more."

She pressed the little hand that she held between hers, and looked up into the face that was bent over hers. Lucy never forgot that look.

"Maggie," she said, in a low voice, that had the solemnity of confession in it, "you are better than I am. I can't——"

She broke off there, and said no more. But they clasped each other again in a last embrace.

[*There have been tremendous rains, and a flood is feared.*]

All were in their beds now, for it was past midnight: all except some solitary watchers such as Maggie. She was seated in her little parlour towards the river, with one candle, that left everything dim in the room, except a letter which lay before her on the table.

[*The letter was from Stephen.*]

"Maggie! whose pain can have been like mine? Whose injury is like mine? Who besides me has met that long look of love that has burnt itself into my soul, so that no other image can come there? Maggie, call me back to you!—call me back to life and goodness! I am banished from both now. I have no motives: I am indifferent to everything. Two months have only deepened the certainty that I can never care for life without you. Write me one

word—say 'Come!' In two days I should be with you. Maggie—have you forgotten what it was to be together?—to be within reach of a look—to be within hearing of each other's voice?"

* * * * *

For hours Maggie felt as if her struggle had been in vain. For hours every other thought that she strove to summon was thrust aside by the image of Stephen waiting for the single word that would bring him to her. She did not *read* the letter: she heard him uttering it, and the voice shook her with its old strange power. . . . It was Stephen's tone of misery, it was the doubt in the justice of her own resolve, that made the balance tremble, and made her once start from her seat to reach the pen and paper, and write "Come!"

* * * * *

She sat quite still, far on into the night: with no impulse to change her attitude, without active force enough even for the mental act of prayer: only waiting for the light that would surely come again. It came with the memories that no passion could long quench: the long past came back to her, and with it the fountains of self-renouncing pity and affection, of faithfulness and resolve. The words that were marked by the quiet hand in the little old book that she had long ago learned by heart, rushed even to her lips, and found a vent for themselves in a low murmur that was quite lost in the loud driving of the rain against the window and the loud moan and roar of the wind: "I have received the cross, I have received it from Thy hand; I will bear it, and bear it till death, as Thou hast laid it upon me."

But soon other words rose that could find no utter-

ance but in a sob: "Forgive me, Stephen! It will pass away. You will come back to her."

She took up the letter, held it to the candle, and let it burn slowly on the hearth. To-morrow she would write to him the last word of parting.

"I will bear it, and bear it till death. . . . But how long it will be before death comes! I am so young, so healthy. How shall I have patience and strength? Am I to struggle and fall and repent again?—has life other trials as hard for me still?"

With that cry of self-despair, Maggie fell on her knees against the table, and buried her sorrow-stricken face. Her soul went out to the Unseen Pity that would be with her to the end. Surely there was something being taught her by this experience of great need; and she must be learning a secret of human tenderness and long-suffering, that the less erring could hardly know? "O God, if my life is to be long, let me live to bless and comfort——"

At that moment Maggie felt a startling sensation of sudden cold about her knees and feet: it was water flowing under her. She started up: the stream was flowing under the door that led into the passage. She was not bewildered for an instant—she knew it was the flood!

[*She calls the people of the house, and in the endeavour to escape, it happens that Maggie is swept away alone in a boat.*]

"O God, where am I? Which is the way home?" she cried out, in the dim loneliness.

What was happening to them at the mill? The flood had once nearly destroyed it. They might be in danger—in distress: her mother and her brother,

alone there, beyond reach of help! Her whole soul was strained now on that thought; and she saw the long-loved faces looking for help into the darkness, and finding none.

* * * * *

Along with the sense of danger and possible rescue for those long-remembered beings at the old home, there was an undefined sense of reconcilement with her brother: what quarrel, what harshness, what unbelief in each other can subsist in the presence of a great calamity, when all the artificial vesture of our life is gone, and we are all one with each other in primitive mortal needs? Vaguely, Maggie felt this—in the strong resurgent love towards her brother that swept away all the later impressions of hard, cruel offence and misunderstanding, and left only the deep, underlying, unshakable memories of early union.

* * * * *

With panting joy that she was there at last—joy that overcame all distress—Maggie neared the front of the house. At first she heard no sound: she saw no object moving. Her boat was on a level with the upstairs window. She called out in a loud piercing voice—

"Tom, where are you? Mother, where are you? Here is Maggie!"

Soon, from the window of the attic in the central gable, she heard Tom's voice—

"Who is it? Have you brought a boat?"

"It is I, Tom—Maggie. Where is mother?"

"She is not here: she went to Garum, the day before yesterday. I'll come down to the lower window."

" Alone, Maggie ? " said Tom, in a voice of deep astonishment, as he opened the middle window on a level with the boat.

" Yes, Tom : God has taken care of me, to bring me to you. Get in quickly. Is there no one else ? "

" No," said Tom, stepping into the boat, " I fear the man is drowned : he was carried down the Ripple, I think, when part of the mill fell with the crash of trees and stones against it : I've shouted again and again, and there has been no answer. Give me the oars, Maggie."

It was not till Tom had pushed off and they were on the wide water—he face to face with Maggie—that the full meaning of what had happened rushed upon his mind. It came with so overpowering a force—it was such a new revelation to his spirit, of the depths in life that had lain beyond his vision, which he had fancied so keen and clear—that he was unable to ask a question. They sat mutely gazing at each other : Maggie with eyes of intense life looking out from a weary, beaten face—Tom pale with a certain awe and humiliation. Thought was busy though the lips were silent : and though he could ask no question, he guessed a story of almost miraculous divinely protected effort. But at last a mist gathered over the blue-gray eyes, and the lips found a word they could utter : the old childish—" Magsie ! "

Maggie could make no answer but a long deep sob of that mysterious wondrous happiness that is one with pain.

As soon as she could speak, she said, " We will go to Lucy, Tom : we'll go and see if she is safe, and then we can help the rest."

Tom rowed with untired vigour, and with a different speed from poor Maggie's. The boat was soon

in the current of the river again, and soon they would be at Tofton.

" Park House stands high up out of the flood," said Maggie. " Perhaps they have got Lucy there."

Nothing else was said ; a new danger was being carried towards them by the river. Some wooden machinery had just given way on one of the wharves, and huge fragments were being floated along. The sun was rising now, and the wide area of watery desolation was spread out in dreadful clearness around them—in dreadful clearness floated onwards the hurrying, threatening masses. A large company in a boat that was working its way along under the Tofton houses, observed their danger, and shouted. " Get out of the current ! "

But that could not be done at once, and Tom, looking before him, saw death rushing on them, Huge fragments, clinging together in fatal fellowship, made one wide mass across the stream.

" It is coming, Maggie ! " Tom said, in a deep hoarse voice, loosing the oars, and clasping her.

The next instant the boat was no longer seen upon the water—and the huge mass was hurrying on in hideous triumph.

But soon the keel of the boat reappeared, a black speck on the golden water.

The boat reappeared—but brother and sister had gone down in an embrace never to be parted : living through again in one supreme moment the days when they had clasped their little hands in love, and roamed the daisied fields together.

Silas Marner

[*Silas Marner, a weaver, driven from his native place by false accusations, settles at Raveloe. He leads a solitary, embittered life, and hoards the gold he earns.*

Godfrey and Dunstan Cass are the sons of Squire Cass. Godfrey is secretly and unhappily married, though he is regarded as the suitor of Nancy Lammeter. Dunstan uses his knowledge of his brother's secret marriage to draw sums of money from him, until they are both desperate to obtain money to replace that which they have taken from their father without his knowledge.

Dunstan goes to Silas Marner's cottage to borrow money, but the weaver is not there.]

DUNSTAN'S own recent difficulty in making his way suggested to him that the weaver had perhaps gone outside his cottage to fetch in fuel, or for some such brief purpose, and had slipped into the Stone-pit. That was an interesting idea to Dunstan, carrying consequences of entire novelty. If the weaver was dead, who had a right to his money? Who would know where his money was hidden? *Who would know that anybody had come to take it away?* He went no farther into the subtleties of evidence: the pressing question, "Where *is* the money?" now took such entire possession of him as to make him quite forget that the weaver's death was not a certainty.

[*He finds the money under the floor, and takes it away. Marner comes home.*]

He rose and placed his candle unsuspectingly on the floor near his loom, swept away the sand without noticing any change, and removed the bricks. The sight of the empty hole made his heart leap violently, but the belief that his gold was gone could not come at once—only terror, and the eager effort to put an end to the terror. He passed his trembling hand all about the hole, trying to think it possible that his eyes had deceived him; then he held the candle in the hole and examined it curiously, trembling more and more. At last he shook so violently that he let fall the candle, and lifted his hands to his head, trying to steady himself, that he might think. Had he put his gold somewhere else, by a sudden resolution last night, and then forgotten it? A man falling into dark waters seeks a momentary footing even on sliding stones; and Silas, by acting as he if believed in false hopes, warded off the moment of despair. He searched in every corner, he turned his bed over, and shook it, and kneaded it; he looked in his brick oven where he laid his sticks. When there was no other place to be searched, he kneeled down again and felt once more all round the hole. There was no untried refuge left for a moment's shelter from the terrible truth.

[*At the Rainbow some of the villagers are assembled.*]

At last, Mr. Snell, the landlord, a man of a neutral disposition, accustomed to stand aloof from human differences as those of beings who were all alike in need of liquor, broke silence, by saying in a doubtful tone to his cousin, the butcher—

"Some folks 'ud say that was a fine beast you druv in yesterday, Bob?"

The butcher, a jolly, smiling, red-haired man, was not disposed to answer rashly. He gave a few puffs before he spat and replied, "And they wouldn't be fur wrong, John."

After this feeble delusive thaw, the silence set in as severely as before.

"Was it a red Durham?" said the farrier, taking up the thread of discourse after the lapse of a few minutes.

The farrier looked at the landlord, and the landlord looked at the butcher, as the person who must take the responsibility of answering.

"Red it was," said the butcher, in his good-humoured husky treble—"and a Durham it was."

"Then you needn't tell *me* who you bought it of," said the farrier, looking round with some triumph; "I know who it is has got the red Durhams o' this country-side. And she'd a white star on her brow, I'll bet a penny?" The farrier leaned forward with his hands on his knees as he put this question, and his eyes twinkled knowingly.

"Well; yes—she might," said the butcher slowly, considering that he was giving a decided affirmative. "I don't say contrairy."

"I knew that very well," said the farrier, throwing himself backward again, and speaking defiantly; "if *I* don't know Mr. Lammeter's cows, I should like to know who does—that's all! And as for the cow you've bought, bargain or no bargain, I've been at the drenching of her—contradick me who will."

The farrier looked fierce, and the mild butcher's conversational spirit was roused a little.

"I'm not for contradicking no man," he said;

" I'm for peace and quietness. Some are for cutting long ribs—I'm for cutting 'em short myself ; but *I* don't quarrel with 'em. All I say is, it's a lovely carkiss—and anybody as was reasonable, it 'ud bring tears into their eyes to look at it."

" Well, it's the cow as I drenched, whatever it is," pursued the farrier angrily ; " and it was Mr. Lammeter's cow, else you told a lie when you said it was a red Durham."

" I tell no lies," said the butcher, with the same mild huskiness as before, " and I contradick none —not if a man was to swear himself black : he's no meat o' mine, nor none o' my bargains. All I say is, it's a lovely carkiss. And what I say I'll stick to ; but I'll quarrel wi' no man."

" No," said the farrier, with bitter sarcasm, looking at the company generally ; " and p'rhaps you arn't pig-headed ; and p'rhaps you didn't say the cow was a red Durham ; and p'rhaps you didn't say she'd got a star on her brow—stick to that, now you're at it."

" Come, come," said the landlord ; " let the cow alone. The truth lies atween you : you're both right and both wrong, as I allays say. And as for the cow's being Mr. Lammeter's, I say nothing to that ; but this I say, as the Rainbow's the Rainbow. And for the matter o' that, if the talk is to be o' the Lammeters, *you* know the most upo' that head, eh, Mr. Macey ? You remember when first Mr. Lammeter's father come into these parts, and took the Warrens ? "

Mr. Macey, tailor and parish-clerk, the latter of which functions rheumatism had of late obliged him to share with a small-featured young man who sat opposite him, held his white head on one side, and twirled his thumbs with an air of complacency,

slightly seasoned with criticism. He smiled pityingly, in answer to the landlord's appeal, and said—

"Ay, ay; I know, I know; but I let other folks talk. I've laid by now, and gev up to the young uns. Ask them as have been to school at Tarley: they've learnt pernouncing; that's come up since my day."

"If you're pointing at me, Mr. Macey," said the deputy-clerk, with an air of anxious propriety, "I'm nowise a man to speak out of my place. As the psalm says—

> "I know what's right, nor only so,
> But also practise what I know."

[*Silas runs to the Rainbow with news of his loss. The farrier speaks.*]

"But what I vote is, as two of the sensiblest o' the company should go with you to Master Kench, the constable's—he's ill i' bed, I know that much—and get him to appoint one of us his deppity; for that's the law, and I don't think anybody 'ull take upon him to contradick me there. It isn't much of a walk to Kench's; and then, if it's me as is deppity, I'll go back with you, Master Marner, and examine your premises; and if anybody's got any fault to find with that, I'll thank him to stand up and say it out like a man."

By this pregnant speech the farrier had re-established his self-complacency, and waited with confidence to hear himself named as one of the superlatively sensible men.

"Let us see how the night is, though," said the landlord, who also considered himself personally

concerned in this proposition. "Why, it rains heavy still," he said, returning from the door.

"Well, I'm not the man to be afraid o' the rain," said the farrier. "For it'll look bad when Justice Malam hears as respectable men like us had a information laid before 'em and took no steps."

The landlord agreed with this view, and after taking the sense of the company, and duly rehearsing a small ceremony known in high ecclesiastical life as the *nolo episcopari*, he consented to take on himself the chill dignity of going to Kench's. But to the farrier's strong disgust, Mr. Macey now started an objection to his proposing himself as a deputy-constable; for that oracular old gentleman, claiming to know the law, stated, as a fact delivered to him by his father, that no doctor could be a constable.

"And you're a doctor, I reckon, though you're only a cow-doctor—for a fly's a fly, though it may be a hoss-fly," concluded Mr. Macey, wondering a little at his own "'cuteness."

There was a hot debate upon this, the farrier being of course indisposed to renounce the quality of doctor, but contending that a doctor could be a constable if he liked—the law meant, he needn't be one if he didn't like. Mr. Macey thought this was nonsense, since the law was not likely to be fonder of doctors than of other folks. Moreover, if it was in the nature of doctors more than of other men not to like being constables, how came Mr. Dowlas to be so eager to act in that capacity?

"*I* don't want to act the constable," said the farrier, driven into a corner by this merciless reasoning; "and there's no man can say it of me, if he'd tell the truth. But if there's to be any jealousy and envying about going to Kench's in the rain, let them

go as like it—you won't get me to go, I can tell you."

[*Time goes by without any clue to the discovery of the robber of Marner's money.*]

He filled up the blank with grief. As he sat weaving, he every now and then moaned low, like one in pain: it was the sign that his thoughts had come round again to the sudden chasm—to the empty evening time. And all the evening, as he sat in his loneliness by his dull fire, he leaned his elbows on his knees, and clasped his head with his hands, and moaned very low—not as one who seeks to be heard.

And yet he was not utterly forsaken in his trouble. The repulsion Marner had always created in his neighbours was partly dissipated by the new light in which this misfortune had shown him. Instead of a man who had more cunning than honest folks could come by, and, what was worse, had not the inclination to use that cunning in a neighbourly way, it was now apparent that Silas had not cunning enough to keep his own. He was generally spoken of as a "poor mushed creatur"; and that avoidance of his neighbours, which had before been referred to his ill-will and to a probable addiction to worse company, was now considered mere craziness.

* * * * *

And so, notwithstanding the honest persuasions of Mr. Macey and Dolly Winthrop, Silas spent his Christmas day in loneliness, eating his meat in sadness of heart, though the meat had come to him as a neighbourly present. In the morning he looked out on the black frost that seemed to press cruelly on every blade of grass, while the half-icy red pool shivered

under the bitter wind ; but towards evening the snow began to fall, and curtained from him even that dreary outlook, shutting him close up with his narrow grief. And he sat in his robbed home through the livelong evening, not caring to close his shutters or lock his door, pressing his head between his hands and moaning, till the cold grasped him and told him that his fire was grey.

[*Squire Cass gives a New Year party. Godfrey and Nancy dance together.*]

" Thank you, sir," she said immediately. " I needn't give you any more trouble. I'm sorry you've had such an unlucky partner."

" That's very ill-natured of you," said Godfrey, standing by her without any sign of intended departure, " to be sorry you've danced with me."

" Oh no, sir, I don't mean to say what's ill-natured at all," said Nancy, looking distractedly prim and pretty. " When gentlemen have so many pleasures, one dance can matter but very little."

" You know that isn't true. You know one dance with you matters more to me than all the other pleasures in the world."

It was a long, long while since Godfrey had said anything so direct as that, and Nancy was startled. But her instinctive dignity and repugnance to any show of emotion made her sit perfectly still, and only throw a little more decision into her voice, as she said—

" No, indeed, Mr. Godfrey, that's not known to me, and I have very good reasons for thinking different. But if it's true, I don't wish to hear it."

" Would you never forgive me, then, Nancy—never think well of me, let what would happen—

would you never think the present made amends for the past? Not if I turned a good fellow, and gave up everything you didn't like?"

Godfrey was half conscious that this sudden opportunity of speaking to Nancy alone had driven him beside himself; but blind feeling had got the mastery of his tongue. Nancy really felt much agitated by the possibility Godfrey's words suggested, but this very pressure of emotion that she was in danger of finding too strong for her, roused all her power of self-command.

"I should be glad to see a good change in anybody, Mr. Godfrey," she answered, with the slightest discernible difference of tone, "but it 'ud be better if no change was wanted."

"You're very hard-hearted, Nancy," said Godfrey pettishly. "You might encourage me to be a better fellow. I'm very miserable—but you've no feeling."

"I think those have the least feeling that act wrong to begin with," said Nancy, sending out a flash in spite of herself. Godfrey was delighted with that little flash, and would have liked to go on and make her quarrel with him; Nancy was so exasperatingly quiet and firm. But she was not indifferent to him *yet*.

* * * * *

While Godfrey Cass was taking draughts of forgetfulness from the sweet presence of Nancy, willingly losing all sense of that hidden bond which at other moments galled and fretted him so as to mingle irritation with the very sunshine, Godfrey's wife was walking with slow uncertain steps through the snow-covered Raveloe lanes, carrying her child in her arms.

This journey on New Year's Eve was a premeditated act of vengeance which she had kept in her heart

ever since Godfrey, in a fit of passion, had told her he would sooner die than acknowledge her as his wife. There would be a great party at the Red House on New Year's Eve, she knew: her husband would be smiling and smiled upon, hiding *her* existence in the darkest corner of his heart. But she would mar his pleasure: she would go in her dingy rags, with her faded face, once as handsome as the best, with her little child that had its father's hair and eyes, and disclose herself to the Squire as his eldest son's wife. It is seldom that the miserable can help regarding their misery as a wrong inflicted by those who are less miserable. Molly knew that the cause of her dingy rags was not her husband's neglect, but the demon Opium to whom she was enslaved, body and soul, except in the lingering mother's tenderness that refused to give him her hungry child. She knew this well; and yet, in the moments of wretched unbenumbed consciousness, the sense of her want and degradation transformed itself continually into bitterness towards Godfrey. *He* was well off; and if she had her rights she would be well off too. The belief that he repented his marriage, and suffered from it, only aggravated her vindictiveness.

[*She falls asleep in the snow, and the child creeps towards a light, which is the light of Silas Marner's cottage.*]

Turning towards the hearth, where the two logs had fallen apart, and sent forth only a red uncertain glimmer, he seated himself on his fireside chair, and was stooping to push his logs together, when, to his blurred vision, it seemed as if there were gold on the floor in front of the hearth. Gold!—his own gold—

brought back to him as mysteriously as it had been taken away! He felt his heart begin to beat violently, and for a few moments he was unable to stretch out his hand and grasp the restored treasure. The heap of gold seemed to glow and get larger beneath his agitated gaze. He leaned forward at last, and stretched forth his hand; but instead of the hard coin with the familiar resisting outline, his fingers encountered soft warm curls.

[*Silas carries the child to the scene of the party.*]

But when Godfrey was lifting his eyes from one of those long glances, they encountered an object as startling to him at that moment as if it had been an apparition from the dead. It *was* an apparition from that hidden life which lies, like a dark by-street behind the goodly ornamented façade that meets the sunlight and the gaze of respectable admirers. It was his own child carried in Silas Marner's arms. That was his instantaneous impression, unaccompanied by doubt, though he had not seen the child for months past; and when the hope was rising that he might possibly be mistaken, Mr. Crackenthorp and Mr. Lammeter had already advanced to Silas, in astonishment at this strange advent. Godfrey joined them immediately, unable to rest without hearing every word—trying to control himself, but conscious that if any one noticed him, they must see that he was white-lipped and trembling.

But now all eyes at that end of the room were bent on Silas Marner; the Squire himself had risen, and asked angrily, "How's this?—what's this?—what do you do coming in here in this way?"

"I'm come for the doctor—I want the doctor,"

Silas had said, in the first moment, to Mr. Crackenthorp.

"Why, what's the matter, Marner?" said the rector. "The doctor's here; but say quietly what you want him for."

"It's a woman," said Silas, speaking low, and half-breathlessly, just as Godfrey came up. "She's dead, I think—dead in the snow, at the Stone-pits—not far from my door."

Godfrey felt a great throb: there was one terror in his mind at that moment: it was, that the woman might *not* be dead. That was an evil terror—an ugly inmate to have found a nestling-place in Godfrey's kindly disposition; but no disposition is a security from evil wishes to a man whose happiness hangs on duplicity.

[*Godfrey goes out in the snow and recognises the dead body of his wife.*]

Godfrey reappeared in the White Parlour with dry feet, and, since the truth must be told, with a sense of relief and gladness that was too strong for painful thoughts to struggle with. For could he not venture now, whenever opportunity offered, to say the tenderest things to Nancy Lammeter—to promise her and himself that he would always be just what she would desire to see him? There was no danger that his dead wife would be recognised: those were not days of active inquiry and wide report; and as for the registry of their marriage, that was a long way off, buried in unturned pages, away from every one's interest but his own. Dunsey might betray him if he came back; but Dunsey might be won to silence.

[*Silas keeps the child.*]

And when the sunshine grew strong and lasting, so that the buttercups were thick in the meadows, Silas might be seen in the sunny mid-day, or in the late afternoon when the shadows were lengthening under the hedge-rows, strolling out with uncovered head to carry Eppie beyond the Stone-pits to where the flowers grew, till they reached some favourite bank where he could sit down, while Eppie toddled to pluck the flowers, and make remarks to the winged things that murmured happily above the bright petals, calling "Dad-dad's" attention continually by bringing him the flowers. Then she would turn her ear to some sudden bird-note, and Silas learned to please her by making signs of hushed stillness, that they might listen for the note to come again: so that when it came, she set up her small back and laughed with gurgling triumph. Sitting on the banks in this way, Silas began to look for the once familiar herbs again; and as the leaves, with their unchanged outline and markings, lay on his palm, there was a sense of crowding remembrances from which he turned away timidly, taking refuge in Eppie's little world, that lay lightly on his enfeebled spirit.

As the child's mind was growing into knowledge, his mind was growing into memory: as her life unfolded, his soul, long stupefied in a cold, narrow prison, was unfolding too, and trembling gradually into full consciousness.

[*Sixteen years have passed. Godfrey and Nancy are married; and Eppie and Silas Marner have lived happily together.*]

" Father," said Eppie, very gently, after they had been sitting in silence a little while, " if I was to be married, ought I to be married with my mother's ring ? "

Silas gave an almost imperceptible start, though the question fell in with the under-current of thought in his own mind, and then said, in a subdued tone, " Why, Eppie, have you been a-thinking on it ? "

" Only this last week, father," said Eppie, ingenuously, " since Aaron talked to me about it."

" And what did he say ? " said Silas, still in the same subdued way, as if he were anxious lest he should fall into the slightest tone that was not for Eppie's good.

" He said he should like to be married, because he was a-going in four-and-twenty, and had got a deal of gardening work, now Mr. Mott's given up ; and he goes twice a-week regular to Mr. Cass's, and once to Mr. Osgood's, and they're going to take him on at the Rectory."

" And who is it as he's wanting to marry ? " said Silas, with rather a sad smile.

" Why, me, to be sure, daddy," said Eppie, with dimpling laughter, kissing her father's cheek ; " as if he'd want to marry anybody else ! "

" And you mean to have him, do you ? " said Silas.

" Yes, some time," said Eppie, " I don't know when. Everybody's married some time, Aaron says. But I told him that wasn't true : for, I said, look at father—he's never been married."

" No, child," said Silas, " your father was a lone man till you was sent to him."

" But you'll never be lone again, father," said Eppie, tenderly. " That was what Aaron said—' I could never think o' taking you away from Master

Marner, Eppie.' And I said, ' It 'ud be no use if you did, Aaron.' And he wants us all to live together, so as you needn't work a bit, father, only what's for your own pleasure ; and he'd be as good as a son to you—that was what he said."

[*Nancy and her sister talk together.*]

" I'm as glad as anything at your husband's making that exchange o' land with cousin Osgood, and beginning the dairying. It's a thousand pities you didn't do it before ; for it'll give you something to fill your mind. There's nothing like a dairy if folks want a bit o' worrit to make the days pass. For as for rubbing furniture, when you can once see your face in a table there's nothing else to look for ; but there's always something fresh with the dairy ; for even in the depths o' winter there's some pleasure in conquering the butter, and making it come whether or no. My dear," added Priscilla, pressing her sister's hand affectionately as they walked side by side, " you'll never be low when you've got a dairy."

" Ah, Priscilla," said Nancy, returning the pressure with a grateful glance of her clear eyes, " but it won't make up to Godfrey : a dairy's not so much to a man. And it's only what he cares for that ever makes me low. I'm contented with the blessings we have, if he could be contented."

" It drives me past patience," said Priscilla impetuously, " that way o' the men—always wanting and wanting, and never easy with what they've got : they can't sit comfortable in their chairs when they've neither ache nor pain, but either they must stick a pipe in their mouths, to make 'em better than well, or else they must be swallowing something strong,

though they're forced to make haste before the next meal comes in. But joyful be it spoken, our father was never that sort o' man. And if it had pleased God to make you ugly, like me, so as the men wouldn't ha' run after you, we might have kept to our own family, and had nothing to do with folks as have got uneasy blood in their veins."

"Oh, don't say so, Priscilla," said Nancy, repenting that she had called forth this outburst; "nobody has any occasion to find fault with Godfrey. It's natural he should be disappointed at not having any children: every man likes to have somebody to work for and lay by for, and he always counted so on making a fuss with 'em when they were little. There's many another man 'ud hanker more than he does. He's the best of husbands."

"Oh, I know," said Priscilla, smiling sarcastically, "I know the way o' wives; they set one on to abuse their husbands, and then they turn round on one and praise 'em as if they wanted to sell 'em."

[*Godfrey comes home one day in grief.*]

"Sit down, Nancy—there," he said, pointing to a chair opposite him. "I came back as soon as I could, to hinder anybody's telling you but me. I've had a great shock—but I care most about the shock it'll be to you."

"It isn't father and Priscilla?" said Nancy, with quivering lips, clasping her hands together tightly on her lap.

"No, it's nobody living," said Godfrey, unequal to the considerate skill with which he would have wished to make his revelation. "It's Dunstan—my brother Dunstan, that we lost sight of sixteen

years ago. We've found him—found his body—his skeleton."

The deep dread Godfrey's look had created in Nancy made her feel these words a relief. She sat in comparative calmness to hear what else he had to tell. He went on :

" The Stone-pit has gone dry suddenly—from the draining, I suppose ; and there he lies—has lain for sixteen years, wedged between two great stones. There's his watch and seals, and there's my gold-handled hunting-whip, with my name on : he took it away, without my knowing, the day he went hunting on Wildfire, the last time he was seen."

Godfrey paused ; it was not so easy to say what came next.

" Do you think he drowned himself ? " said Nancy, almost wondering that her husband should be so deeply shaken by what had happened all those years ago to an unloved brother, of whom worse things had been augured.

" No, he fell in," said Godfrey, in a low but distinct voice, as if he felt some deep meaning in the fact. Presently he added : " Dunstan was the man that robbed Silas Marner."

The blood rushed to Nancy's face and neck at this surprise and shame, for she had been bred up to regard even a distant kinship with crime as a dishonour.

" Oh, Godfrey ! " she said, with compassion in her tone, for she had immediately reflected that the dishonour must be felt still more keenly by her husband. . . .

" Everything comes to light, Nancy, sooner or later. When God Almighty wills it, our secrets are found out. I've lived with a secret on my mind, but I'll keep it

from you no longer. I wouldn't have you know it by somebody else, and not by me—I wouldn't have you find it out after I'm dead. I'll tell you now. It's been 'I will' and 'I won't' with me all my life —I'll make sure of myself now."

Nancy's utmost dread had returned. The eyes of the husband and wife met with awe in them, as at a crisis which suspended affection.

"Nancy," said Godfrey, slowly, "when I married you, I hid something from you—something I ought to have told you. That woman Marner found dead in the snow—Eppie's mother—that wretched woman —was my wife: Eppie is my child."

He paused, dreading the effect of his confession. But Nancy sat quite still, only that her eyes dropped and ceased to meet his.

She was pale and quiet as a meditative statue, clasping her hands on her lap.

"You'll never think the same of me again," said Godfrey, after a little while, with some tremor in his voice.

She was silent.

"I oughtn't to have left the child unowned: I oughtn't to have kept it from you. But I couldn't bear to give you up, Nancy. I was led away into marrying her—I suffered for it."

Still Nancy was silent, looking down; and he almost expected that she would presently get up and say she would go to her father's. How could she have any mercy for faults that must seem so black to her, with her simple severe notions?

But at last she lifted up her eyes to his again and spoke. There was no indignation in her voice—only deep regret.

"Godfrey, if you had but told me this six years

ago, we could have done some of our duty by the child. Do you think I'd have refused to take her in, if I'd known she was yours ? "

At that moment Godfrey felt all the bitterness of an error that was not simply futile, but had defeated its own end. He had not measured this wife with whom he had lived so long. But she spoke again, with more agitation.

" And—oh, Godfrey—if we'd had her from the first, if you'd taken to her as you ought, she'd have loved me for her mother—and you'd have been happier with me : I could better have bore my little baby dying, and our life might have been more like what we used to think it 'ud be."

The tears fell, and Nancy ceased to speak. . . .

" I'm a worse man than you thought I was, Nancy," said Godfrey, rather tremulously. " Can you forgive me ever ? "

" The wrong to me is but little, Godfrey : you've made it up to me—you've been good to me for fifteen years. It's another you did the wrong to ; and I doubt it can never be all made up for."

" But we can take Eppie now," said Godfrey. " I won't mind the world knowing at last. I'll be plain and open for the rest o' my life."

" It'll be different coming to us, now she's grown up," said Nancy, shaking her head sadly. " But it's your duty to acknowledge her and provide for her ; and I'll do my part by her, and pray to God Almighty to make her love me."

" Then we'll go together to Silas Marner's this very night, as soon as everything's quiet at the Stone-pits."

[*They suggest that Eppie shall live with them, but she refuses.*]

"But I've a claim on you, Eppie—the strongest of all claims. It's my duty, Marner, to own Eppie as my child, and provide for her. She's my own child: her mother was my wife. I've a natural claim on her that must stand before every other."

Eppie had given a violent start, and turned quite pale. Silas, on the contrary, who had been relieved, by Eppie's answer, from the dread lest his mind should be in opposition to hers, felt the spirit of resistance in him set free, not without a touch of parental fierceness. "Then, sir," he answered, with an accent of bitterness that had been silent in him since the memorable day when his youthful hope had perished—"then, sir, why didn't you say so sixteen year ago, and claim her before I'd come to love her, i'stead o' coming to take her from me now, when you might as well take the heart out o' my body? God gave her to me because you turned your back upon her, and He looks upon her as mine: you've no right to her! When a man turns a blessing from his door, it falls to them as take it in."

"I know that, Marner. I was wrong. I've repented of my conduct in that matter," said Godfrey, who could not help feeling the edge of Silas's words.

"I'm glad to hear it, sir," said Marner, with gathering excitement; "but repentance doesn't alter what's been going on for sixteen year. Your coming now and saying, 'I'm her father' doesn't alter the feelings inside us. It's me she's been calling her father ever since she could say the word."

* * * * *

" I can't feel as I've got any father but one," said Eppie impetuously, while the tears gathered, " I've always thought of a little home where he'd sit i' the corner, and I should fend and do everything for him; I can't think o' no other home. I wasn't brought up to be a lady and I can't turn my mind to it. I like the working-folks, and their victuals, and their ways. And," she ended passionately, while the tears fell, " I'm promised to marry a working-man, as'll live with father, and help me to take care of him."

Godfrey looked up at Nancy with a flushed face and smarting, dilated eyes. This frustration of a purpose towards which he had set out under the exalted consciousness that he was about to compensate in some degree for the greatest demerit of his life, made him feel the air of the room stifling.

" Let us go," he said, in an undertone.

" We won't talk of this any longer now," said Nancy, rising. " We're your well-wishers, my dear —and yours too, Marner. We shall come and see you again. It's getting late now."

In this way she covered her husband's abrupt departure, for Godfrey had gone straight to the door, unable to say more.

Romola

[*In* 1492 *a stranger, Tito Melema, comes to Florence. He is a young Greek scholar, and is befriended by Nello, the barber, who introduces him to Bardo di Bardi, a blind scholar.*]

"MESSER Bardo," he [Nello] said, in a more measured and respectful tone than was usual with him, "I have the honour of presenting to you the Greek scholar, who has been eager to have speech of you, not less from the report I made to him of your learning and your priceless collections, than because of the furtherance your patronage may give him under the transient need to which he has been reduced by shipwreck. His name is Tito Melema, at your service."

Romola's astonishment could hardly have been greater if the stranger had worn a panther-skin and carried a thyrsus; for the cunning barber had said nothing of the Greek's age or appearance; and among her father's scholarly visitors, she had hardly ever seen any but middle-aged or gray-headed men. There was only one masculine face, at once youthful and beautiful, the image of which remained deeply impressed on her mind: it was that of her brother, who long years ago had taken her on his knee, kissed her, and never come back again: a fair face, with sunny hair, like her own. But the habitual attitude of her mind towards strangers—a proud self-dependence

and determination to ask for nothing even by a smile —confirmed in her by her father's complaints against the world's injustice, was like a snowy embankment hemming in the rush of admiring surprise. Tito's bright face showed its rich-tinted beauty without any rivalry of colour above his black *sajo* or tunic reaching to the knees. It seemed like a wreath of spring, dropped suddenly into Romola's young but wintry life, which had inherited nothing but memories—memories of a dead mother, of a lost brother, of a blind father's happier time—memories of far-off light, love, and beauty, that lay embedded in dark mines of books, and could hardly give out their brightness again until they were kindled for her by the torch of some known joy. Nevertheless she returned Tito's bow, made to her on entering, with the same pale proud face as ever; but, as he approached, the snow melted, and when he ventured to look towards her again, while Nello was speaking, a pink flush overspread her face, to vanish again almost immediately, as if her imperious will had recalled it.

* * * * *

While Tito was speaking, some emotion passed, like a breath on the waters, across Bardo's delicate features; he leaned forward, put out his right hand towards Romola, and turned his head as if about to speak to her; but then, correcting himself, turned away again, and said, in a subdued voice:

"Excuse me; is it not true—you are young?"

"I am three-and-twenty," said Tito.

"Ah," said Bardo, still in a tone of subdued excitement, "and you had, doubtless, a father who cared for your early instruction—who, perhaps, was himself a scholar?"

There was a slight pause before Tito's answer came

to the ear of Bardo; but for Romola and Nello it commenced with a slight shock that seemed to pass through him, and cause a momentary quivering of the lip; doubtless at the revival of a supremely painful remembrance.

"Yes," he replied; "at least, a father by adoption. He was a Neapolitan, and of accomplished scholarship both Latin and Greek. But," added Tito, after another slight pause, "he is lost to me—was lost on a voyage he too rashly undertook to Delos."

[*Tito and Bardo agree to work together.*]

"But before you go"—here the old man, in spite of himself, fell into a more faltering tone—"you will perhaps permit me to touch your hand? It is long since I touched the hand of a young man."

Bardo had stretched out his aged white hand and Tito immediately placed his dark but delicate and supple fingers within it. Bardo's cramped fingers closed over them, and he held them for a few minutes in silence. Then he said:

"Romola, has this young man the same complexion as thy brother—fair and pale?"

"No, father," Romola answered, with determined composure, though her heart began to beat violently with mingled emotions. "The hair of Messere is dark—his complexion is dark." Inwardly she said, "Will he mind it? will it be disagreeable? No, he looks so gentle and good-natured." Then aloud again:

"Would Messere permit my father to touch his hair and face?"

Her eyes inevitably made a timid entreating appeal while she asked this, and Tito's met them with soft

brightness as he said, "Assuredly," and, leaning forward, raised Bardo's hand to his curls, with a readiness of assent which was the greater relief to her because it was unaccompanied by any sign of embarrassment.

Bardo passed his hand again and again over the long curls and grasped them a little, as if their spiral resistance made his inward vision clearer; then he passed his hand over the brow and cheek, tracing the profile with the edge of his palm and fourth finger, and letting the breadth of his hand repose on the rich oval of the cheek.

"Ah!" he said, as his hand glided from the face and rested on the young man's shoulder. "He must be very unlike thy brother, Romola: and it is the better."

[*Tito succeeds in disposing of jewels he has for sale, for five hundred florins.*]

"A man's ransom!"—who was it that had said five hundred florins was more than a man's ransom? If now, under this midday sun, on some hot coast far away, a man somewhat stricken in years—a man not without high thoughts and with the most passionate heart—a man who long years ago had rescued a little boy from a life of beggary, filth, and cruel wrong, had reared him tenderly, and been to him as a father—if that man were now under this summer sun toiling as a slave, hewing wood and drawing water, perhaps being smitten and buffeted because he was not deft and active? If he were saying to himself, "Tito will find me: he had but to carry our manuscripts and gems to Venice; he will have raised money, and will never rest till he finds me out"?

If that were certain, could he, Tito, see the price of the gems lying before him, and say, "I will stay at Florence, where I am fanned by soft airs of promised love and prosperity: I will not risk myself for his sake?" No, surely not, *if it were certain.* But nothing could be further from certainty. The galley had been taken by a Turkish vessel on its way to Delos: *that* was known by the report of the companion galley, which had escaped. But there had been resistance, and probable bloodshed; a man had been seen falling overboard: who were the survivors, and what had befallen them amongst all the multitude of possibilities? Had not he, Tito, suffered shipwreck, and narrowly escaped drowning? He had good cause for feeling the omnipresence of casualties that threatened all projects with futility. The rumour that there were pirates who had a settlement in Delos was not to be depended on, or might be nothing to the purpose. What, probably enough, would be the result if he were to quit Florence and go to Venice; get authoritative letters—yes, he knew that might be done—and set out for the Archipelago? Why, that he should be himself seized, and spend all his florins on preliminaries, and be again a destitute wanderer—with no more gems to sell.

[*In the Festa crowd Tito meets Tessa, who had once given him some milk.*]

"Now, little one, where were you going? Are you come by yourself to the Festa?"

"Ah, no!" said Tessa, looking frightened and distressed again; "I have lost my mother in the crowd—her and my father-in-law. They will be angry—he will beat me. It was in the crowd in San

Pulinari—somebody pushed me along and I couldn't stop myself, so I got away from them. Oh, I don't know where they're gone! Please, don't leave me!"

Her eyes had been swelling with tears again, and she ended with a sob. . . .

"My poor little Tessa! leave off crying. Let us see what can be done. Where is your home—where do you live?"

There was no answer, but the sobs began to subside a little and the drops to fall less quickly.

"Come! I'll take you a little way, if you'll tell me where you want to go."

The apron fell, and Tessa's face began to look as contented as a cherub's budding from a cloud. The diabolical conjurer, the anger and the beating, seemed a long way off.

"I think I'll go home, if you'll take me," she said, in a half whisper, looking up at Tito with wide blue eyes, and with something sweeter than a smile—with a child-like calm.

"Come, then, little one," said Tito, in a caressing tone, putting her arm within his again. "Which way is it?"

"Beyond Peretola—where the large pear-tree is."

* * * * *

"If they are so cruel to you, Tessa, shouldn't you like to leave them, and go and live with a beautiful lady who would be kind to you, if she would have you to wait upon her?"

Tessa seemed to hold her breath for a moment or two. Then she said doubtfully, "I don't know."

"Then should you like to be *my* little servant, and live with me?" said Tito, smiling. He meant no more than to see what sort of pretty look and answer she would give.

There was a flush of joy immediately. "Will you take me with you now? Ah! I shouldn't go home and be beaten then." She paused a little while, and then added more doubtfully, "But I should like to fetch my black-faced kid."

"Yes, you must go back to your kid, my Tessa," said Tito, rising, "and I must go the other way."

"By Jupiter!" he added, as he went from under the shade of the tree, "it is not a pleasant time of day to walk from here to the Via de' Bardi; I am more inclined to lie down and sleep in this shade."

It ended so. Tito had an unconquerable aversion to anything unpleasant, even when an object very much loved and desired was on the other side of it. He had risen early; had waited; had seen sights, and had been already walking in the sun: he was inclined for a siesta, and inclined all the more because little Tessa was there, and seemed to make the air softer. He lay down on the grass again, putting his cap under his head on a green tuft by the side of Tessa. That was not quite comfortable; so he moved again, and asked Tessa to let him rest his head against her lap; and in that way he soon fell asleep. Tessa sat quiet as a dove on its nest, just venturing, when he was fast asleep, to touch the wonderful dark curls that fell backward from his ear. She was too happy to go to sleep—too happy to think that Tito would wake up, and that then he would leave her, and she must go home.

[*On his way to the Via de' Bardi Tito meets a friar, Fra Luca.*]

"Pardon me, but—from your face and your ring," said the friar, in a faint voice, "is not your name Tito Melema?"

"Yes," said Tito, also speaking faintly, doubly jarred by the cold touch and the mystery. He was not apprehensive or timid through his imagination, but through his sensations and perceptions he could easily be made to shrink and turn pale like a maiden.

"Then I shall fulfil my commission."

The friar put his hand under his scapulary, and drawing out a small linen bag which hung round his neck, took from it a bit of parchment, doubled and stuck firmly together with some black adhesive substance, and placed it in Tito's hand. On the outside was written in Italian, in a small but distinct character :

"Tito Melema, aged twenty-three, with a dark, beautiful face, long dark curls, the brightest smile, and a large onyx ring on his right forefinger."

Tito did not look at the friar, but tremblingly broke open the bit of parchment. Inside, the words were :

"I am sold for a slave : I think they are going to take me to Antioch. The gems alone will serve to ransom me."

[*Tito has resolved to stay, for his heart is set on success, and on winning Romola.*]

Yet Romola's life seemed an image of that loving, pitying devotedness, that patient endurance of irksome tasks, from which he had shrunk and excused himself. But he was not out of love with goodness, or prepared to plunge into vice : he was in his fresh youth, with soft pulses for all charm and loveliness ; he had still a healthy appetite for ordinary human joys, and the poison could only work by degrees. He had sold himself to evil, but at present life seemed so nearly the same to him that he was not conscious of the bond. He meant all things to go on as they had

done before, both within and without him ; he meant to win golden opinions by meritorious exertion, by ingenious learning, by amiable compliance ; he was not going to do anything that would throw him out of harmony with the beings he cared for. And he cared supremely for Romola ; he wished to have her for his majestic, beautiful, and loving wife.

[*Tito and Romola are alone in the ante-room.*]

" There they are," said Romola, pointing upward ; " every book is just where it was when my father ceased to see them."

Tito stood by her without hastening to reach the books. They had never been in this room together before.

" I hope," she continued, turning her eyes full on Tito, with a look of grave confidence—" I hope he will not weary you ; this work makes him so happy."

" And me too, Romola—if you will only let me say, I love you—if you will only think me worth loving a little."

His speech was the softest murmur, and the dark beautiful face, nearer to hers than it had ever been before, was looking at her with beseeching tenderness.

" I do love you," murmured Romola ; she looked at him with the same simple majesty as ever, but her voice had never in her life before sunk to that murmur. It seemed to them both that they were looking at each other a long while before her lips moved again ; yet it was but a moment till she said, " I know *now* what it is to be happy."

[*Monna Brigida, a cousin, comes to the Via de' Bardi.*]

"And all I say is, I wish it hadn't been the Dominicans that poor Dino joined years ago, for then I should have been glad when I heard them say he was come back——"

"Silenzio!" said Bardo, in a loud agitated voice, while Romola half started from her chair, clasped her hands, and looked round at Tito, as if *now* she might appeal to him. Monna Brigida gave a little scream, and bit her lip.

"Donna!" said Bardo again, "hear once more my will. Bring no reports about that name to this house; and thou, Romola, I forbid thee to ask. My son is dead."

Bardo's whole frame seemed vibrating with passion, and no one dared to break silence again. Monna Brigida lifted her shoulders and her hands in mute dismay; then she rose as quietly as possible, gave many significant nods to Tito and Romola, motioning to them that they were not to move, and stole out of the room like a culpable fat spaniel who has barked unseasonably.

Meanwhile, Tito's quick mind had been combining ideas with lightning-like rapidity. Bardo's son was not really dead, then, as he had supposed: he was a monk; he was "come back"; and Fra Luca—yes! it was the likeness to Bardo and Romola that had made the face seem half known to him. If he were only dead at Fiesole at that moment! This importunate selfish wish inevitably thrust itself before every other thought. It was true that Bardo's rigid will was a sufficient safeguard against any intercourse

between Romola and her brother; but *not* against the betrayal of what he knew to others, especially when the subject was suggested by the coupling of Romola's name with that of the very Tito Melema whose description he had carried round his neck as an index. No! nothing but Fra Luca's death could remove all danger; but his death was highly probable, and after the momentary shock of the discovery, Tito let his mind fall back in repose on that confident hope.

[*Tito and Romola ask Bardo's consent to their marriage.*]

"Why should it not be?" said Bardo, as if arguing against any opposition to his assent, rather than assenting. "It would be a happiness to me; and thou, too, Romola, wouldst be the happier for it."

He stroked her long hair gently and bent towards her.

"Ah, I have been apt to forget that thou needest some other love than mine. And thou wilt be a noble wife. Bernardo thinks I shall hardly find a husband fitting for thee. And he is perhaps right. For thou art not like the herd of thy sex: thou art such a woman as the immortal poets had a vision of, when they sang the lives of the heroes—tender but strong, like thy voice, which has been to me instead of the light in the years of my blindness. . . . And so thou lovest him?"

He sat upright again for a minute, and then said, in the same tone as before, "Why should it not be? I will think of it; I will talk with Bernardo."

Tito felt a disagreeable chill at this answer, for Bernardo del Nero's eyes had retained their keen

suspicion whenever they looked at him, and the uneasy remembrance of Fra Luca converted all uncertainty into fear.

"Speak for me, Romola," he said pleadingly. "Messer Bernardo is sure to be against me."

"No, Tito," said Romola, "my godfather will not oppose what my father firmly wills. And it is your will that I should marry Tito—is it not true, father? Nothing has ever come to me before that I have wished for strongly; I did not think it possible that I could care so much for anything that could happen to myself."

[*Romola is summoned to the bedside of her ill brother at San Marco. Tito fears that his wrong-doing will now be exposed.*

Tito meets Tessa again, at the peasants' fair.]

"Should you like to be married to me, Tessa?" said Tito softly, half enjoying the comedy, as he saw the pretty childish seriousness on her face, half prompted by hazy previsions which belonged to the intoxication of despair.

He felt her vibrating before she looked up at him and said timidly, "Will you let me?"

He answered only by a smile, and by leading her forward in front of the *cerretano*, who seeing an excellent jest in Tessa's evident delusion, assumed a surpassing sacerdotal solemnity, and went through the mimic ceremony with a liberal expenditure of *lingua furbesca* or thieves' Latin. . . .

"Then you will not go away from me again," said Tessa, after they had walked a few steps, "and you will take me to where you live." She spoke meditatively, and not in a questioning tone

But, presently, she added, "I must go back once to the *madre*, though, to tell her I brought the cocoons, and that I'm married, and shall not go back again."

Tito felt the necessity of speaking now; and, in the rapid thought prompted by that necessity, he saw that by undeceiving Tessa he should be robbing himself of some, at least, of that pretty trustfulness which might, by-and-by, be his only haven from contempt. It would spoil Tessa to make her the least particle wiser or more suspicious.

"Yes, my little Tessa," he said caressingly, "you must go back to the *madre;* but you must not tell her you are married—you must keep that a secret from everybody; else some very great harm would happen to me, and you would never see me again."

She looked up at him with pale fear in her face.

"You must go back and feed your goats and mules, and do just as you have always done before, and say no word to any one about me."

The corners of her mouth fell a little.

"And then, perhaps, I shall come and take care of you again when you want me, as I did before. But you must do just what I tell you, else you will not see me again."

"Yes, I will, I will," she said, in a loud whisper, frightened at that blank prospect.

They were silent a little while; and then Tessa, looking at her hand, said:

"The *madre* wears a betrothal ring. She went to church and had it put on, and then after that, another day, she was married. And so did the cousin Nannina. But then *she* married Gollo," added the poor little thing, entangled in the difficult comparison between her own case and others within her experience.

[*Romola's dying brother relates to her a vision, while Savonarola, the prior of San Marco, stands by the bedside. The vision warns Romola against marriage. Fra Luca dies.*

Tito goes to the barber's shop.]

"Doubtless, Messer Tito knows that Bardo's son is dead," said Cronaca, who had just come up.

Tito's heart gave a leap—had the death happened before Romola saw him?

"No, I had not heard it," he said, with no more discomposure than the occasion seemed to warrant, turning and leaning against the doorpost, as if he had given up his intention of going away. "I knew that his sister had gone to see him. Did he die before she arrived?"

"No," said Cronaca; "I was in San Marco at the time, and saw her come out from the chapter-house with Fra Girolamo, who told us that the dying man's breath had been preserved as by a miracle, that he might make a disclosure to his sister."

Tito felt that his fate was decided.

[*Romola sends for Tito.*]

His heart gave a great throb as he saw the door move: Romola was there. It was all like a flash of lightning: he felt, rather than saw, the glory about her head, the tearful appealing eyes; he felt, rather than heard, the cry of love with which she said, "Tito!"

And in the same moment she was in his arms, and sobbing with her face against his.

How poor Romola had yearned through the watches

of the night to see that bright face! The new image of death; the strange bewildering doubt infused into her by the story of a life removed from her understanding and sympathy; the haunting vision, which she seemed not only to hear uttered by the low gasping voice, but to live through, as if it had been her own dream, had made her more conscious than ever that it was Tito who had first brought the warm stream of hope and gladness into her life, and who had first turned away the keen edge of pain in the remembrance of her brother. She would tell Tito everything; there was no one else to whom she could tell it. She had been restraining herself in the presence of her father all the morning; but now, that long pent-up sob might come forth. Proud and self-controlled to all the world beside, Romola was as simple and unreserved as a child in her love for Tito. She had been quite contented with the days when they had only looked at each other; but now, when she felt the need of clinging to him, there was no thought that hindered her.

"My Romola! my goddess!" Tito murmured with passionate fondness, as he clasped her gently, and kissed the thick golden ripples on her neck. He was in paradise: disgrace, shame, parting—there was no fear of them any longer. This happiness was too strong to be marred by the sense that Romola was deceived in him; nay, he could only rejoice in her delusion; for, after all, concealment had been wisdom.

[*Romola relates the vision.*]

"Your mind lingers apart from our love, my Romola," Tito said, with a soft reproachful murmur. "It seems a forgotten thing to you."

She looked at the beseeching eyes in silence, till the sadness all melted out of her own.

"My joy!" she said, in her full clear voice.

* * * * *

It was the 17th of November, 1494; more than eighteen months since Tito and Romola had been finally united in the joyous Easter time, and had had a rainbow-tinted shower of comfits thrown over them, after the ancient Greek fashion, in token that the heavens would shower sweets on them through all their double life.

[*Florence is excited at the advent of the French king, with an army. Savonarola is preaching and prophesying to the people.*]

Tito Melema had become conspicuously serviceable in the intercourse with the French guests, from his familiarity with Southern Italy, and his readiness in the French tongue, which he had spoken in his early youth; and he had paid more than one visit to the French camp at Signa. The lustre of good fortune was upon him; he was smiling, listening, and explaining, with his usual graceful unpretentious ease, and only a very keen eye bent on studying him could have marked a certain amount of change in him which was not to be accounted for by the lapse of eighteen months. It was that change which comes from the final departure of moral youthfulness —from the distinct self-conscious adoption of a part in life. The lines of the face were as soft as ever, the eyes as pellucid; but something was gone—something as indefinable as the changes in the morning twilight.

[*The Florentines cut the ropes of some French prisoners.*]

The soldier. . . . was struggling along on the north side of the piazza, but the object of his pursuit had taken the other direction. That object was the eldest prisoner, who had wheeled round the Baptistery and was running towards the Duomo, determined to take refuge in that sanctuary rather than trust to his speed ; but in mounting the steps, his foot received a shock ; he was precipitated towards the group of *signori*, whose backs were turned to him, and was only able to recover his balance as he clutched one of them by the arm.

It was Tito Melema who felt that clutch. He turned his head, and saw the face of his adopted father, Baldassarre Calvo, close to his own.

The two men looked at each other, silent as death : Baldassarre, with dark fierceness and a tightening grip of the soiled worn hands on the velvet-clad arm ; Tito, with cheeks and lips all bloodless, fascinated by terror. It seemed a long while to them—it was but a moment.

The first sound Tito heard was the short laugh of Piero di Cosimo, who stood close by him and was the only person that could see his face.

" Ha, ha ! I know what a ghost should be now."

" This is another escaped prisoner," said Lorenzo Tornabuoni. " Who is he, I wonder ? "

" *Some madman, surely*," said Tito.

He hardly knew how the words had come to his lips ; there are moments when our passions speak and decide for us, and we seem to stand by and wonder. They carry in them an inspiration of

crime, that in one instant does the work of long premeditation.

The two men had not taken their eyes off each other, and it seemed to Tito, when he had spoken, that some magical poison had darted from Baldassarre's eyes, and that he felt it rushing through his veins. But the next instant the grasp on his arm had relaxed, and Baldassarre had disappeared within the church.

[*Baldassarre hears Savonarola preach.*]

To Baldassarre those words only brought the vague triumphant sense that he, too, was devoting himself —signing with his own blood the deed by which he gave himself over to an unending fire, that would seem but coolness to his burning hatred.

"I rescued him—I cherished him—if I might clutch his heart-strings for ever! Come, O blessed promise! Let my blood flow; let the fire consume me!"

The one chord vibrated to its utmost. Baldassarre clutched his own palms, driving his long nails into them, and burst into a sob with the rest.

[*Romola's father has died three months ago.*]

Romola looked back on that hour with some indignation against herself, because even with the first outburst of her sorrow there had mingled the irrepressible thought, "Perhaps my life with Tito will be more perfect now."

* * * * *

The breath of sadness that still cleaved to her lot while she saw her father month after month sink from

elation into new disappointment as Tito gave him less and less of his time, and made bland excuses for not continuing his own share of the joint work—that sadness was no fault of Tito's, she said, but rather of their inevitable destiny. If he stayed less and less with her, why, that was because they could hardly ever be alone. His caresses were no less tender: if she pleaded timidly on any one evening that he should stay with her father instead of going to another engagement which was not peremptory, he excused himself with such charming gaiety, he seemed to linger about her with such fond playfulness before he could quit her, that she could only feel a little heart-ache in the midst of her love, and then go to her father and try to soften his vexation and disappointment, while inwardly her imagination was busy trying to see how Tito could be as good as she had thought he was, and yet find it impossible to sacrifice those pleasures of society which were necessarily more vivid to a bright creature like him than to the common run of men. She herself would have liked more gaiety, more admiration; it was true, she gave it up willingly for her father's sake—she would have given up much more than that for the sake even of a slight wish on Tito's part. It was clear that their natures differed widely; but perhaps it was no more than the inherent difference between man and woman that made her affections more absorbing. If there were any other difference she tried to persuade herself that the inferiority was on her side. Tito was really kinder than she was, better tempered, less proud and resentful; he had no angry retorts, he met all complaints with perfect sweetness; he only escaped as quietly as he could from things that were unpleasant.

* * * * *

During these three months of their double solitude she had thought of each day as an epoch in which their union might begin to be more perfect. She was conscious of being sometimes a little too sad or too urgent about what concerned her father's memory—a little too critical or coldly silent when Tito narrated the things that were said and done in the world he frequented—a little too hasty in suggesting that by living quite simply as her father had done, they might become rich enough to pay Bernardo del Nero, and reduce the difficulties about the library. It was not possible that Tito could feel so strongly on this last point as she did, and it was asking a great deal from him to give up luxuries for which he really laboured. The next time Tito came home she would be careful to suppress all those promptings that seemed to isolate her from him.

* * * * *

He just turned and kissed her, when she took off his mantle, then went towards a high-backed chair placed for him near the fire, threw himself into it, and flung away his cap, saying, not peevishly, but in a fatigued tone of remonstrance, as he gave a slight shudder :

" Romola, I wish you would give up sitting in this library. Surely our own rooms are pleasanter in this chill weather."

Romola felt hurt. She had never seen Tito so indifferent in his manner ; he was usually full of lively solicitous attention. And she had thought so much of his return to her after the long day's absence ! He must be very weary.

" I wonder you have forgotten, Tito," she answered, looking at him anxiously, as if she wanted to read an excuse for him in the signs of bodily fatigue. " You know I am making a catalogue on the new

plan that my father wished for; you have not time to help me, so I must work at it closely."

Tito, instead of meeting Romola's glance, closed his eyes and rubbed his hands over his face and hair. He felt he was behaving unlike himself, but he would make amends to-morrow. The terrible resurrection of secret fears, which, if Romola had known them, would have alienated her from him for ever, caused him to feel an alienation already begun between them —caused him to feel a certain repulsion towards a woman from whose mind he was in danger. . . .

Suddenly she drew her arm away with a start, and a gaze of alarmed inquiry.

"What have you got on under your tunic, Tito? Something as hard as iron."

"It *is* iron—it is chain-armour," he said at once. He was prepared for the surprise and the question, and he spoke quietly, as of something that he was not hurried to explain.

"There was some unexpected danger to-day, then?" said Romola, in a tone of conjecture. "You had it lent to you for the procession?"

"No; it is my own. I shall be obliged to wear it constantly for some time."

"What is it that threatens you, my Tito?" said Romola, looking terrified, and clinging to him again.

"Every one is threatened in these times, who is not a rabid enemy of the Medici. Don't look distressed, my Romola—this armour will make me safe against covert attacks."

Tito put his hand on her neck and smiled. This little dialogue about the armour had broken through the new crust, and made a channel for the old sweet habit of kindness.

[*Nello the barber defends Tito from the charge of cowardice.*]

"And, as for our Piero here, if he makes such a point of valour, let him carry his biggest brush for a weapon and his palette for a shield, and challenge the widest-mouthed Swiss he can see in the Prato to a single combat."

"*Va*, Nello," growled Piero, "thy tongue runs on as usual, like a mill when the Arno's full—whether there's grist or not."

"Excellent grist, I tell thee. For it would be as reasonable to expect a grizzled painter like thee to be fond of getting a javelin inside thee as to expect a man whose wits have been sharpened on the classics to like having his handsome face clawed by a wild beast."

"There you go, supposing you'll get people to put their legs into a sack because you call it a pair of hosen," said Piero. "Who said anything about a wild beast, or about an unarmed man rushing on battle? Fighting is a trade, and it's not my trade. I should be a fool to run after danger, but I could face it if it came to me."

"How is it you're so afraid of the thunder then, my Piero?" said Nello, determined to chase down the accuser. "You ought to be able to understand why one man is shaken by a thing that seems a trifle to others—you who hide yourself with the rats as soon as a storm comes on."

"That is because I have a particular sensibility to loud sounds; it has nothing to do with my courage or my conscience."

"Well, and Tito Melema may have a peculiar sensi-

bility to being laid hold of unexpectedly by prisoners who have run away from French soldiers. Men are born with antipathies ; I myself can't abide the smell of mint. Tito was born with an antipathy to old prisoners who stumble and clutch. Ecco ! "

[*Baldassarre realises that his scholarly knowledge has left him, and that his memory is otherwise impaired.*]

Could he prove anything ? Could he even begin to allege anything, with the confidence that the links of thought would not break away ? Would any believe that he had ever had a mind filled with rare knowledge, busy with close thoughts, ready with various speech ? It had all slipped away from him—that laboriously gathered store. Was it utterly and for ever gone from him, like the waters from an urn lost in the wide ocean ? Or, was it still within him, imprisoned by some obstruction that might one day break asunder ?

It might be so ; he tried to keep his grasp on that hope. For, since the day when he had first walked feebly from his couch of straw, and had felt a new darkness within him under the sunlight, his mind had undergone changes, partly gradual and persistent, partly sudden and fleeting. As he had recovered his strength of body, he had recovered his self-command and the energy of his will ; he had recovered the memory of all that part of his life which was closely inwrought with his emotions ; and he had felt more and more constantly and painfully the uneasy sense of lost knowledge. But more than that—once or twice, when he had been strongly excited, he had seemed momentarily to be in entire possession of his past self, as old men doze for an instant, and get back the

consciousness of their youth : he seemed again to see Greek pages and understand them, again to feel his mind moving unbenumbed among familiar ideas. It had been but a flash, and the darkness closing in again seemed the more horrible ; but might not the same thing happen again for longer periods ? If it would only come and stay long enough for him to achieve a revenge—devise an exquisite suffering, such as a mere right arm could never inflict !

[*Tito suggests to Romola that they shall leave Florence. But Romola objects that they will then be unable to fulfil her father's living and dying wish that his library should become a public collection in Florence, bearing his name.*]

" I am sorry to hear you speak in that spirit of blind persistence, my Romola," he said quietly, " because it obliges me to give you pain. But I partly foresaw your opposition, and as a prompt decision was necessary, I avoided that obstacle, and decided without consulting you. The very care of a husband for his wife's interest compels him to that separate action sometimes—even when he has such a wife as you, my Romola."

She turned her eyes on him in breathless inquiry.

" I mean," he said, answering her look, " that I have arranged for the transfer, both of the books and antiquities, where they will find the highest use and value. The books have been bought for the Duke of Milan, the marbles and bronzes and the rest are going to France ; and both will be protected by the stability of a great Power, instead of remaining in a city which is exposed to ruin."

Before he had finished speaking, Romola had started from her seat, and stood up looking down at him,

with tightened hands falling before her, and, for the first time in her life, with a flash of fierceness in her scorn and anger.

"You have *sold* them?" she asked, as if she distrusted her ears.

"I have," said Tito, quailing a little. The scene was unpleasant—the descending scorn already scorched him.

"You are a treacherous man!" she said, with something grating in her voice, as she looked down at him.

She was silent for a minute, and he sat still, feeling that ingenuity was powerless just now. Suddenly she turned away, and said, in an agitated tone, "It may be hindered—I am going to my godfather." . . .

"Try at least to understand the fact," said Tito, "and do not seek to take futile steps which may be fatal. It is of no use for you to go to your godfather. Messer Bernardo cannot reverse what I have done. Only sit down. You would hardly wish, if you were quite yourself, to make known to any third person what passes between us in private."

Tito knew that he had touched the right fibre there. But she did not sit down; she was too unconscious of her body voluntarily to change her attitude.

"Why can it not be reversed?" she said, after a pause. "Nothing is moved yet."

"Simply because the sale has been concluded by written agreement; the purchasers have left Florence, and I hold the bonds for the purchase-money."

"If my father had suspected you of being a faithless man," said Romola, in a tone of bitter scorn, which insisted on darting out before she could say anything else, "he would have placed the library safely out of your power. But death overtook him

too soon, and when you were sure his ear was deaf, and his hand stiff, you robbed him." She paused an instant, and then said, with gathered passion, " Have you robbed somebody else, who is *not* dead ? Is that the reason you wear armour ? "

Romola had been driven to utter the words as men are driven to use the lash of the horsewhip. At first, Tito felt horribly cowed ; it seemed to him that the disgrace he had been dreading would be worse than he had imagined it. But soon there was a reaction : such power of dislike and resistance as there was within him was beginning to rise against a wife whose voice seemed like the herald of a retributive fate. Her, at least, his quick mind told him that he might master.

[*Baldassarre obtains leave from an old woman to sleep in her outhouse.*]

In three minutes Tessa, with her lantern in one hand and a wooden bowl of macaroni in the other, was kicking gently at the door of the outhouse, and Baldassarre, roused from sad reverie, doubted in the first moment whether he was awake as he opened the door and saw this surprising little handmaid, with delight in her wide eyes, breaking in on his dismal loneliness.

" I've brought you some supper," she said, lifting her mouth towards his ear and shouting, as if he had been deaf like Monna Lisa. " Sit down and eat it, while I stay with you." . . .

The invitation was not a disagreeable one, for he had been gnawing a remnant of dried bread, which had left plenty of appetite for anything warm and relishing. Tessa watched the disappearance of two

or three mouthfuls without speaking, for she had thought his eyes rather fierce at first; but now she ventured to put her mouth to his ear again and cry:

"I like my supper; don't you?"

It was not a smile, but rather the milder look of a dog touched by kindness but unable to smile, that Baldassarre turned on this round blue-eyed thing that was caring about him.

"Yes," he said; "but I can hear well—I'm not deaf."

"It is true; I forgot," said Tessa, lifting her hands and clasping them. "But Monna Lisa is deaf, and I live with her. She's a kind old woman, and I'm not frightened at her. And we live very well; we have plenty of nice things. I can have nuts if I like. And I'm not obliged to work now. I used to have to work, and I didn't like it; but I liked feeding the mules, and I should like to see poor Giannetta, the little mule, again. We've only got a goat and two kids, and I used to talk to the goat a good deal, because there was nobody else but Monna Lisa. But now I've got something else—can you guess what it is?"

She drew her head back, and looked with a challenging smile at Baldassarre, as if she had proposed a difficult riddle to him.

"No," said he, putting aside his bowl, and looking at her dreamily. It seemed as if this young prattling thing were some memory come back out of his own youth. . . .

"Well, then, I've got a little baby. Such a pretty *bambinetto*, with little fingers and nails! Not old yet; it was born at the Natività, Monna Lisa says. I was married one Natività, a long, long, while ago, and nobody knew. O Santa Madonna! I didn't mean to tell you that!"

[*When Tito next comes, Tessa describes the old man.*]

A few steps, and he might be face to face with his father, with no witness by ; he might seek forgiveness and reconciliation ; and there was money now, from the sale of the library, to enable them to leave Florence without disclosure, and go into Southern Italy, where, under the probable French rule, he had already laid a foundation for patronage. . . . But with this possibility of relief, by an easy spring, from present evil, there rose the other possibility, that the fierce-hearted man might refuse to be propitiated. Well—and if he did, things would only be as they had been before ; for there would be *no witness by*. It was not repentence with a white sheet round it and taper in hand, confessing its hated sin in the eyes of men, that Tito was preparing for ; it was a repentance that would make all things pleasant again, and keep all past unpleasant things secret.

* * * * *

Tito had his hand on the door and was pulling it ; it dragged against the ground as such old doors often do, and Baldassarre, startled out of his dream-like state, rose from his sitting posture in vague amazement, not knowing where he was. He had not yet risen to his feet, and was still kneeling on one knee, when the door came wide open and he saw, dark against the moonlight, with the rays falling on one bright mass of curls and one round olive cheek, the image of his reverie—not shadowy—close and real like water at the lips after the thirsty dream of it. No thought could come athwart that eager thirst. In one moment, before Tito could start back, the old man, with the preternatural force of rage in his limbs,

had sprung forward and the dagger had flashed out. In the next moment the dagger had snapped in two, and Baldassarre, under the parrying force of Tito's arm, had fallen back on the straw, clutching the hilt with its bit of broken blade. The pointed end lay shining against Tito's feet. . . .

After they had looked at each other a little while, Baldassarre lying motionless in despairing rage, Tito said in his soft tones, just as they had sounded before the last parting on the shores of Greece :

" *Padre mio !* " There was a pause after those words, but no movement or sound till he said :

" I came to ask your forgiveness ! "

Again he paused, that the healing balm of those words might have time to work. But there was no sign of change in Baldassarre ; he lay as he had fallen, leaning on one arm ; he was trembling, but it was from the shock that had thrown him down.

" I was taken by surprise that morning. I wish now to be a son to you again. I wish to make the rest of your life happy, that you may forget what you have suffered." . . .

Presently Baldassarre began to move. He threw away the broken dagger, and slowly and gradually, still trembling, began to raise himself from the ground. Tito put out his hand to help him, and so strangely quick are men's souls that in this moment when he began to feel his atonement was accepted, he had a darting thought of the irksome efforts it entailed. Baldassarre clutched the hand that was held out, raised himself and clutched it still, going close up to Tito till their faces were not a foot off each other. Then he began to speak, in a deep trembling voice :

" I saved you—I nurtured you—I loved you. You forsook me—you robbed me—you denied me. What

can you give me? You have made the world bitterness to me; but there is one draught of sweetness left —that you shall know agony."

[*Tito realises Baldassarre's weakness, and decides that he need not leave Florence, where he is leading a life of political activity. Romola resolves to leave Florence and Tito. She writes.*]

"Tito, my love for you is dead; and therefore, so far as I was yours, I too am dead. Do not try to put in force any laws for the sake of fetching me back: that would bring you no happiness. The Romola you married can never return. I need explain nothing to you after the words I uttered to you the last time we spoke long together. If you supposed them to be words of transient anger, you will know now that they were the sign of an irreversible change.

"I think you will fulfil my wish that my bridal chest should be sent to my godfather, who gave it me. It contains my wedding clothes and the portraits and other relics of my father and mother."

[*Tito attends a banquet, at which Baldassarre suddenly appears, to accuse him.*]

"There is a man among you who is a scoundrel, a liar, a robber. I was a father to him. I took him from beggary when he was a child. I reared him, I cherished him, I taught him, I made him a scholar. My head has lain hard that his might have a pillow. And he left me in slavery; he sold the gems that were mine, and when I came again, he denied me."

The last words had been uttered with almost convulsed agitation, and Baldassarre paused, trembling.

All glances were turned on Tito, who was now looking straight at Baldassarre. It was a moment of desperation that annihilated all feeling in him, except the determination to risk anything for the chance of escape. And he gathered confidence from the agitation by which Baldassarre was evidently shaken. He had ceased to pinch the neck of the lute, and had thrust his thumbs into his belt, while his lips had begun to assume a slight curl. He had never yet done an act of murderous cruelty even to the smallest animal that could utter a cry, but at that moment he would have been capable of treading the breath from a smiling child for the sake of his own safety.

"What does this mean, Melema?" said Bernardo Rucellai, in a tone of cautious surprise. He, as well as the rest of the company, felt relieved that the tenor of the accusation was not political.

"Messer Bernardo," said Tito, "I believe this man is mad. I did not recognise him the first time he encountered me in Florence, but I know now that he is the servant who years ago accompanied me and my adoptive father to Greece, and was dismissed on account of misdemeanours. His name is Jacopo di Nola. Even at that time I believe his mind was unhinged, for, without any reason, he had conceived a strange hatred towards me; and now I am convinced that he is labouring under a mania which causes him to mistake his identity. He has already attempted my life since he has been in Florence; and I am in constant danger from him. But he is an object of pity rather than of indignation. It is too certain that my father is dead. You have only my word for it; but I must leave it to your judgment how far it is probable that a man of intellect and learning would have been lurking about in dark

corners for the last month with the purpose of assassinating me; or how far it is probable that, if this man were my second father, I could have any motive for denying him. That story about my being rescued from beggary, is the vision of a diseased brain. But it will be a satisfaction to me at least if you will demand from him proofs of his identity, lest any malignant person should choose to make this mad impeachment a reproach to me."

[*A test of scholarship is put to Baldassarre.*]

The sight of the book recalled the habitual longing and faint hope that he could read and understand, and he moved towards the chair immediately. The book was open before him, and he bent his head a little towards it, while everybody watched him eagerly. He turned no leaf. His eyes wandered over the pages that lay before him, and then fixed on them with a straining gaze. This lasted for two or three minutes in dead silence. Then he lifted his hands to each side of his head, and said, in a low tone of despair, "Lost, lost!"

[*Baldassarre is put into prison.*
As Romola goes out of Florence she meets Savonarola, who commands her to return.]

She turned away her eyes from Fra Girolamo, and stood for a minute or two with her hands hanging clasped before her, like a pale statue. At last she spoke, as if the words were being wrung from her, still looking on the ground:

"My husband . . . he is not . . . my love is gone!"

"My daughter, there is the bond of a higher love. Marriage is not carnal only, made for selfish delight. See what that thought leads you to! It leads you to wander away in a false garb from all the obligations of your place and name. That would not have been, if you had learned that it is a sacramental vow, from which none but God can release you. My daughter, your life is not as a grain of sand, to be blown by the winds; it is as flesh and blood, that dies if it be sundered. Your husband is not a malefactor?"

Romola flushed and started "Heaven forbid! No; I accuse him of nothing."

* * * * *

While Savonarola spoke with growing intensity, his arms tightly folded before him still, as they had been from the first, but his face alight as from an inward flame, Romola felt herself surrounded and possessed by the glow of his passionate faith. The chill doubts all melted away; she was subdued by the sense of something unspeakably great to which she was being called by a strong being who roused a new strength within herself. In a voice that was like a low, prayerful cry, she said:

"Father, I will be guided. Teach me! I will go back."

* * * * *

She went up to her room, threw off her serge, destroyed the parting letters, replaced all her precious trifles, unbound her hair, and put on her usual black dress. Instead of taking a long exciting journey, she was to sit down in her usual place. The snow fell against the windows, and she was alone.

She felt the dreariness, yet her courage was high, like that of a seeker who has come on new signs of

gold. She was going to thread life by a fresh clue. She had thrown all the energy of her will into renunciation.

[*Two years later, misfortune falls upon Florence in war, famine and pestilence. Among the women who minister to distress is Romola.*

Tito is the bearer of a letter to Savonarola, which is a plot to entice him outside the city. Romola's suspicions are aroused.]

"Tell me the truth, Tito—this time tell me the truth," said Romola, in a low quivering voice. "It will be safer for you."

"Why should I desire to tell you anything else, my angry saint?" said Tito, with a slight touch of contempt, which was the vent of his annoyance; "since the truth is precisely that over which you have most reason to rejoice—namely, that my knowing a plot of Spini's enables me to secure the Frate from falling a victim to it."

"What is the plot?"

"That I decline to tell," said Tito. "It is enough that the Frate's safety will be secured."

"It is a plot for drawing him outside the gates that Spini may murder him."

"There has been no intention of murder. It is simply a plot for compelling him to obey the Pope's summons to Rome. But as I serve the popular government, and think the Frate's presence here is a necessary means of maintaining it at present, I choose to prevent his departure. You may go to sleep with entire ease of mind to-night."

For a moment Romola was silent. Then she said,

in a voice of anguish, " Tito, it is of no use : I have no belief in you."

She could just discern his action as he shrugged his shoulders, and spread out his palms in silence. That cold dislike which is the anger of unimpassioned beings was hardening within him.

" If the Frate leaves the city—if any harm happens to him," said Romola, after a slight pause, in a new tone of indignant resolution—" I will declare what I have heard to the Signoria, and you will be disgraced. What if I am your wife ? " she went on impetuously ; " I will be disgraced with you. If we are united, I am that part of you that will save you from crime. Others shall not be betrayed."

[*Tito is prevented, by Romola's threats, from carrying out his design.*

Romola speaks to Tito of Baldassarre.]

" And where is he now, pray ? " said Tito, still pale but governing himself.

" He was lying lifeless in the street from starvation," said Romola. " I revived him with bread and wine. I brought him to our door, but he refused to come in. Then I gave him some money, and he went away without telling me anything. But he had found out that I was your wife. *Who* is he ? "

" A man, half mad, half imbecile, who was once my father's servant in Greece, and who has a rancorous hatred towards me because I got him dismissed for theft. Now you have the whole mystery, and the further satisfaction of knowing that I am again in danger of assassination. The fact of my wearing the armour, about which you seem to have thought so

much, must have led you to infer that I was in danger from this man. Was that the reason you chose to cultivate his acquaintance and invite him into the house ? "

Romola was mute. To speak was only like rushing with bare breast against a shield.

[*Baldassarre and Romola meet again.*]

Gradually his glance gathered a more definite expression, and at last he said with abrupt emphasis :

" Ah ! you would have been my daughter ! "

The swift flush came in Romola's face and went back again as swiftly, leaving her with white lips a little apart, like a marble image of horror. For her mind, this revelation was made. . . .

" You are a woman of proud blood—is it not true ? You go to hear the preacher ; you hate baseness—baseness that smiles and triumphs. You hate your husband ? "

" Oh, God ! were you really his father ! " said Romola, in a low voice, too entirely possessed by the images of the past to take any note of Baldassarre's question. " Or was it as he said ? Did you take him when he was little ? "

" Ah, you believe me—you know what he is ! " said Baldassarre exultingly, tightening the pressure on her arm, as if the contact gave him power. " You will help me ? " . . .

" He told us his father was dead—was drowned," said Romola faintly. " Surely he must have believed it then. Oh ! he could not have been so base *then !* "

A vision had risen of what Tito was to her in those first days when she thought no more of wrong in him than a child thinks of poison in flowers. The yearning

regret that lay in that memory brought some relief from the tension of horror. With one great sob the tears rushed forth.

"Ah, you are young, and the tears come easily," said Baldassarre, with some impatience. "But tears are no good; they only put out the fire within, and it is the fire that works. Tears will hinder us. Listen to me." . . .

The fierceness had flamed up again. He spoke with his former intensity, and grasped Romola's arm again.

"But you will help me? He has been false to you too. He has another wife, and she has children. He makes her believe he is her husband, and she is a foolish, helpless thing. I will show you where she lives."

The first shock that passed through Romola was visibly one of anger. The woman's sense of indignity was inevitably foremost. Baldassarre instinctively felt her in sympathy with him.

"You hate him," he went on. "Is it not true? There is no love between you; I know that. I know women can hate; and you have proud blood. You hate falseness, and you can love revenge."

Romola sat paralysed by the shock of conflicting feelings. She was not conscious of the grasp that was bruising her tender arm. . . .

"You say she is foolish and helpless—that other wife—and believes him to be her real husband. Perhaps he is; perhaps he married her before he married me."

"I cannot tell," said Baldassarre, pausing in that action of feeling the knife, and looking bewildered. "I can remember no more. I only know where she lives. You shall see her. I will take you; but not

now," he added hurriedly, "*he*, may be there. The night is coming on."

"It is true," said Romola, starting up with a sudden consciousness that the sun had set and the hills were darkening; "but you will come and take me—when?"

"In the morning," said Baldassarre, dreaming that she, too, wanted to hurry to her vengeance.

[*Piero de' Medici comes with an army to win Florence from the Republic. He retreats, but the people of Florence cry vengeance on those within the city who must have connived at his coming.*

Romola goes to Tessa's home.]

An agitated flush came over Romola's face in the first moment of certainty, but she had bent her cheek against Lillo's head. The feeling that leaped out in that flush was something like exultation at the thought that the wife's burden might be about to slip from her overladen shoulders; that this little ignorant creature might prove to be Tito's lawful wife. A strange exultation for a proud and high-born woman to have been brought to! But it seemed to Romola as if that were the only issue that would make duty anything else for her than an insoluble problem.

[*But Romola questions Tessa, and discovers that her lot must remain unchanged.*

Tito tells Romola that her godfather, Bernardo del Nero, is among those who have been arrested for conspiracy against the Republic.]

The tide of Romola's feelings had been violently turned into a new channel. In the tumult of that

moment there could be no check to the words which came as the impulsive utterance of her long-accumulating horror. When Tito had named the men of whom she felt certain he was the confederate, she said, with a recoiling gesture and low-toned bitterness :

" And *you*—you are safe ? "

" You are certainly an amiable wife, my Romola," said Tito, with the coolest irony. " Yes ; I am safe."

They turned away from each other in silence.

[*It has been Tito's policy to stand well with the Medicians, the Republic, and Savonarola. Now that he is in danger of punishment for implication in the Medician plot, he saves himself by privately giving information against the five Florentines who have already been imprisoned. Romola begs Savonarola to intercede for the life of the prisoners, but he refuses.*]

" Do you then know so well what will further the coming of God's kingdom, father, that you will dare to despise the plea of mercy—of justice—of faithfulness to your own teaching ? Has the French king then brought renovation to Italy ? Take care, father, lest your enemies have some reason when they say, that in your visions of what will further God's kingdom you see only what will strengthen your own party."

" And that is true ! " said Savonarola, with flashing eyes. Romola's voice had seemed to him in that moment the voice of his enemies. " The cause of my party *is* the cause of God's kingdom."

" I do not believe it ! " said Romola, her whole frame shaken with passionate repugnance. " God's kingdom is something wider—else, let me stand outside it with the beings that I love."

The two faces were lit up, each with an opposite emotion, each with an opposite certitude. Further words were impossible. Romola hastily covered her head and went out in silence.

[*Bernardo and his companions are executed. Romola wanders away from Florence to the sea, where she procures a small boat.*]

In this sea there was no tide that would help to carry her away if she waited for its ebb ; but Romola thought the breeze from the land was rising a little. She got into the boat, unfurled the sail, and fastened it as she had learned in that first brief lesson. She saw that it caught the light breeze, and this was all she cared for. Then she loosed the boat from its moorings, and tried to urge it with an oar, till she was far out from the land, till the sea was dark even to the west, and the stars were disclosing themselves like a palpitating life over the wide heavens. Resting at last, she threw back her cowl, and, taking off the kerchief underneath, which confined her hair, she doubled them both under her head for a pillow on one of the boat's ribs. The fair head was still very young and could bear a hard pillow.

And so she lay, with the soft night air breathing on her while she glided on the waters and watched the deepening quiet of the sky. She was alone now ; she had freed herself from all claims, she had freed herself even from that burden of choice which presses with heavier and heavier weight when claims have loosed their guiding hold.

Had she found anything like the dream of her girlhood ? No. Memories hung upon her like the weight of broken wings that could never be lifted—memories

of human sympathy which even in its pains leaves a thirst that the Great Mother has no milk to still. Romola felt orphaned in those wide spaces of sea and sky. She read no message of love for her in that far-off symbolic writing of the heavens, and with a great sob she wished that she might be gliding into death.

She drew the cowl over her head again and covered her face, choosing darkness rather than the light of the stars, which seemed to her like the hard light of eyes that looked at her without seeing her. Presently she felt that she was in the grave, but not resting there ; she was touching the hands of the beloved dead beside her, and trying to wake them.

[*The people of Florence wish Savonarola to prove himself by walking through fire. Savonarola writes to the French king to ask him to assist in summoning a General Council, but this letter, through the treachery of Tito Melema, is intercepted. The fire-test, however, does not come off, owing to much discussion as to the conditions, and the descent of darkness and rain.*

A furious mob attacks San Marco the next day, but Savonarola's life is saved through his being led out to prison. The crowd then proceeds to murder his supporters. An enemy of Tito Melema contrives to turn the wrath of the crowd against the house in the Via de' Bardi.]

But the master of that house was neither sleeping nor in bed ; he had not been in bed that night. For Tito's anxiety to quit Florence had been stimulated by the events of the previous day : investigations would follow in which appeals might be made to him delaying his departure ; and in all delay he had an uneasy sense that there was danger. Falsehood had prospered and waxed strong ; but it had nourished

the twin life, Fear. He no longer wore his armour, he was no longer afraid of Baldassarre ; but from the corpse of that dead fear a spirit had risen—the undying *habit* of fear. He felt he should not be safe till he was out of this fierce, turbid Florence ; and now he was ready to go. Maso was to deliver up his house to the new tenant ; his horses and mules were awaiting him in San Gallo ; Tessa and the children had been lodged for the night in the Borgo outside the gate, and would be dressed in readiness to mount the mules and join him. He descended the stone steps into the courtyard, he passed through the great doorway, not the same Tito, but as brilliant, as on the day when he had first entered that house and made the mistake of falling in love with Romola. The mistake was remedied now, the old life was cast off, and was soon to be far behind him.

[*He encounters the mob.*]

His mantle was being torn off him with strong pulls that would have throttled him if the fibula had not given way. Then his scarsella was snatched at ; but all the while he was being hustled and dragged ; and the snatch failed—his scarsella still hung at his side. Shouting, yelling, half-motiveless execration rang stunningly in his ears, spreading even amongst those who had not yet seen him, and only knew there was a man to be reviled. Tito's horrible dread was that he should be struck down or trampled on before he reached the open arches that surmount the centre of the bridge. There was one hope for him—that they might throw him over before they had wounded him or beaten the strength out of him ; and his whole

soul was absorbed in that one hope and its obverse terror.

Yes—they *were* at the arches. In that moment Tito, with bloodless face and eyes dilated, had one of the self-preserving inspirations that come in extremity. With a sudden desperate effort he mastered the clasp of his belt, and flung belt and scarsella forward towards a yard of clear space against the parapet, crying in a ringing voice :

" There are diamonds ! there is gold ! "

In the instant the hold on him was relaxed, and there was a rush towards the scarsella. He threw himself on the parapet with a desperate leap, and the next moment plunged—plunged with a great plash into the dark river far below.

It was his chance of salvation ; and it was a good chance. His life had been saved once before by his fine swimming, and as he rose to the surface again after his long dive he had a sense of deliverance. He struck out with all the energy of his strong prime, and the current helped him. If he could only swim beyond the Ponte alla Carrara he might land in a remote part of the city, and even yet reach San Gallo. Life was still before him. And the idiot mob, shouting and bellowing on the bridge there, would think he was drowned.

[*He swims on and on to safety.*]

Yet the next bridge—the last bridge—was passed. He was conscious of it ; but in that tumult of his blood, he could only feel vaguely that he was safe and might land. But where ? The current was having its way with him ; he hardly knew where he was ;

exhaustion was bringing on the dreamy state that precedes unconsciousness.

But now there were eyes that discerned him—aged eyes, strong for the distance. Baldassarre, looking up blankly from the search in the runlet that brought him nothing, had seen a white object coming along the broader stream. Could that be any fortunate chance for *him?* He looked and looked till the object gathered form; then he leaned forward with a start as he sat among the rank green stems, and his eyes seemed to be filled with a new light. Yet he only watched—motionless. Something was being brought to him.

The next instant a man's body was cast violently on the grass two yards from him, and he started forward like a panther, clutching the velvet tunic as he fell forward on the body and flashed a look in the man's face.

Dead—was he dead? The eyes were rigid. But no, it could not be—justice had brought him. Men looked dead sometimes, and yet the life came back into them. Baldassarre did not feel feeble in that moment. He knew just what he could do. He got his large fingers within the neck of the tunic and held them there, kneeling on one knee beside the body and watching the face. There was a fierce hope in his heart, but it was mixed with trembling. In his eyes there was only fierceness; all the slow-burning remnant of life within him seemed to have leaped into flame. . . .

Surely at last the eyelids were quivering; the eyes were no longer rigid. There was a vibrating light in them—they opened wide.

"Ah, yes! You see me—you know me!"

Tito knew him; but he did not know whether

it was life or death that had brought him into the presence of his injured father. It might be death—and death might mean this chill gloom with the face of the hideous past hanging over him for ever.

But now Baldassarre's only dread was, lest the young limbs should escape him. He pressed his knuckles against the round throat and knelt upon the chest with all the force of his aged frame. Let death come now!

[*Romola sleeps in her boat, and, waking, finds herself in a creek. She lands, and is in a pestilence-stricken village. Romola stays in the village for some months, working among the people. But her conscience condemns her absence from Florence, and she goes back. She learns of her husband's death and of Savonarola's arrest.*]

All the mental activity she could exert under that load of awe-stricken grief, was absorbed by two purposes which must supersede every other; to try and see Savonarola, and to learn what had become of Tessa and the children.

[*Tessa is found in grief and want.*]

That day they all went home to Monna Brigida's, in the Borgo degli Albizzi. Romola had made known to Tessa by gentle degrees, that Naldo could never come to her again; not because he was cruel, but because he was dead.

"But be comforted, my Tessa," said Romola. "I am come to take care of you always. And we have got Lillo and Ninna."

[*Romola witnesses the execution of Savonarola.*]

"Cover your eyes, madonna," said Jacopo Nardi; "Fra Girolamo will be the last."

It was not long before she had to uncover them again. Savonarola was there. He was not far off her now. He had mounted the steps; she could see him look round on the multitude.

But in the same moment expectation died, and she only saw what he was seeing—torches waving to kindle the fuel beneath his dead body, faces glaring with a yet worse light; she only heard what *he* was hearing—gross jests, taunts, and curses.

The moment was past. Her face was covered again, and she only knew that Savonarola's voice had passed into eternal silence.

Felix Holt

[*Harold Transome returns, after fifteen years' absence abroad, to Transome Court, where his mother and his imbecile father live. His unloved elder brother has died during his absence, and he is now heir to the estates. He is a widower with one son, and he has made a fortune.*]

HE volunteered no information about himself and his past life at Smyrna, but answered pleasantly enough, though briefly, whenever his mother asked for any detail. He was evidently ill-satisfied as to his palate, trying red pepper to everything, then asking if there were any relishing sauces in the house, and when Hickes brought various home-filled bottles, trying several, finding them failures, and finally falling back from his plate in despair. Yet he remained good-humoured, saying something to his father now and then for the sake of being kind, and looking on with a pitying shrug as he saw him watch Hickes cutting his food. Mrs. Transome thought with some bitterness that Harold showed more feeling for her feeble husband who had never cared in the least about him, than for her, who had given him more than the usual share of mother's love.

[*Mr. Jermyn, the lawyer, calls.*]

They sat down to breakfast with such slight talk as this going on. Each of the party was preoccupied

and uneasy. Harold's mind was busy constructing probabilities about what he should discover of Jermyn's mismanagement or dubious application of funds, and the sort of self-command he must in the worst case exercise in order to use the man as long as he wanted him. Jermyn was closely observing Harold with an unpleasant sense that there was an expression of acuteness and determination about him which would make him formidable. He would certainly have preferred at that moment that there had been no second heir of the Transome name to come back upon him from the East. Mrs. Transome was not observing the two men; rather, her hands were cold, and her whole person shaken by their presence; she seemed to hear and see what they said and did with preternatural acuteness, and yet she was also seeing and hearing what had been said and done many years before, and feeling a dim terror about the future. There were piteous sensibilities in this faded woman, who thirty-four years ago, in the splendour of her bloom, had been imperious to one of these men, and had rapturously pressed the other as an infant to her bosom, and now knew that she was of little consequence to either of them.

[*Harold declares his intention of standing for Parliament as a Liberal, and Jermyn agrees to be his agent. Harold becomes acquainted with the estate.*]

The woods had been recklessly thinned, and there had been insufficient planting. He had not yet thoroughly investigated the various accounts kept by his mother, by Jermyn, and by Banks the bailiff; but what had been done with the large sums which had been received for timber was a suspicious

mystery to him. He observed that the farm held by Jermyn was in first-rate order, that a good deal had been spent on the buildings, and that the rent had stood unpaid. Mrs. Transome had taken an opportunity of saying that Jermyn had had some of the mortgage-deeds transferred to him, and that his rent was set against so much interest. Harold had only said, in his careless yet decisive way, "Oh, Jermyn be hanged! It seems to me if Durfey hadn't died and made room for me, Jermyn would have ended by coming to live here, and you would have had to keep the lodge and open the gate for his carriage. But I shall pay him off—mortgages and all—by and by. I'll owe him nothing—not even a curse."

[*Mrs. Transome and Mr. Jermyn walk in the garden.*]

"Let me take your arm."

He gave it immediately, putting on his hat and wondering. For more than twenty years Mrs. Transome had never chosen to take his arm.

"I have but one thing to ask you. Make me a promise."

"What is it?"

"That you will never quarrel with Harold."

"You must know that it is my wish not to quarrel with him."

"But make a vow—fix it in your mind as a thing not to be done. Bear anything from him rather than quarrel with him."

"A man can't make a vow not to quarrel," said Jermyn, who was already a little irritated by the implication that Harold might be disposed to use him roughly. "A man's temper may get the better of

him at any moment. I am not prepared to bear *anything*."

"Good God!" said Mrs. Transome, taking her hand from his arm, "is it possible you don't feel how horrible it would be?"

[*Felix Holt, a young watch-mender, calls at the house of Mr. Lyon, a widower, and dissenting minister of Treby. Esther, Mr. Lyon's step-daughter, is at home.*]

"Good-afternoon, Miss Lyon," said Felix, taking off his cloth cap: he resolutely declined the expensive ugliness of a hat, and in a poked cap and without a cravat, made a figure at which his mother cried every Sunday, and thought of with a slow shake of the head at several passages in the minister's prayer.

"Dear me, it is you, Mr. Holt! I fear you will have to wait some time before you can see my father. The sermon is not ended yet, and there will be the hymn and the prayer, and perhaps other things to detain him."

"Well, will you let me sit down in the kitchen? I don't want to be a bore."

"Oh, no," said Esther, with her pretty light laugh, "I always give you credit for not meaning it. Pray come in, if you don't mind waiting. I was sitting in the kitchen: the kettle is singing quite prettily. It is much nicer than the parlour—not half so ugly."

"There I agree with you."

"How very extraordinary! But if you prefer the kitchen, and don't want to sit with me, I can go into the parlour."

"I came on purpose to sit with you," said Felix, in his blunt way, "but I thought it likely you might be vexed at seeing me. I wanted to talk to you, but

I've got nothing pleasant to say. As your father would have it, I'm not given to prophesy smooth things—to prophesy deceit."

"I understand," said Esther, sitting down. "Pray be seated. You thought I had no afternoon sermon, so you came to give me one." . . .

"Why do you read this mawkish stuff on a Sunday, for example?" he said, snatching up *Réné*, and running his eye over the pages.

"Why don't you always go to chapel, Mr. Holt, and read Howe's *Living Temple*, and join the Church?"

"There's just the difference between us—I know why I don't do those things. I distinctly see that I can do something better. I have other principles, and should sink myself by doing what I don't recognise as the best."

"I understand," said Esther, as lightly as she could, to conceal her bitterness. "I am a lower kind of being, and could not so easily sink myself." . . .

"Ah! now you are offended with me, and disgusted with me. I expected it would be so. A woman doesn't like a man who tells her the truth."

"I think you boast a little too much of your truth-telling, Mr. Holt," said Esther, flashing out at last. "That virtue is apt to be easy to people when they only wound others and not themselves. Telling the truth often means no more than taking a liberty."

"Yes, I suppose I should have been taking a liberty if I had tried to drag you back by the skirt when I saw you running into a pit."

"You should really found a sect. Preaching is your vocation. It is a pity you should ever have an audience of only one."

"I see; I have made a fool of myself. I thought you had a more generous mind—that you might be

kindled to a better ambition. But I've set your vanity aflame—nothing else. I'm going. Good-bye."

"Good-bye," said Esther, not looking at him. He did not open the door immediately. He seemed to be adjusting his cap and pulling it down. Esther longed to be able to throw a lasso round him and compel him to stay, that she might say what she chose to him; her very anger made this departure irritating, especially as he had the last word, and that a very bitter one. But soon the latch was lifted and the door closed behind him. She ran up to her bedroom and burst into tears.

* * * * *

She heard her father coming into the house. She dried her tears, tried to recover herself hurriedly, and went down to him.

"You want your tea, father; how your forehead burns!" she said gently, kissing his brow, and then putting her cool hand on it.

Mr. Lyon felt a little surprise; such spontaneous tenderness was not quite common with her; it reminded him of her mother.

"My sweet child," he said gratefully, thinking with wonder of the treasures still left in our fallen nature.

[*Mr. Lyon has reason to fear that the old report of the death of his wife's first husband may have been mistaken, and that Esther's father may thus be living. Mr. Lyon confides in Mr. Jermyn.*]

Mr. Lyon, in his need for help from one who had that wisdom of the serpent which, he argued, is not forbidden, but is only of hard acquirement to dovelike innocence, had been gradually led to pour out to the

attorney all the reasons which made him desire to know the truth about the man who called himself Maurice Christian: he had shown all the precious relics, the locket, the letters, and the marriage certificate. And Jermyn had comforted him by confidently promising to ascertain, without scandal or premature betrayals, whether this man were really Annette's husband, Maurice Christian Bycliffe.

[*Mr. Jermyn ascertains that Esther's father is really dead. At the same time he knows that Esther, being Bycliffe's daughter, is a claimant to the Transome estate. He resolves to preserve this discovery that he may use it as a threat against Harold Transome, should he ever make himself too unpleasant.*

Esther takes her watch to be mended by Felix.]

"You look distressed, Miss Lyon. I hope there is no trouble at home" (Felix was thinking of the minister's agitation on the previous Sunday). "But I ought perhaps to beg your pardon for saying so much."

Poor Esther was quite helpless. The mortification which had come like a bruise to all the sensibilities that had been in keen activity, insisted on some relief. Her eyes filled instantly, and a great tear rolled down while she said in a loud sort of whisper, as involuntary as her tears:

"I wanted to tell you that I was not offended—that I am not ungenerous—I thought you might think—but you have not thought of it."

Was there ever more awkward speaking?—or any behaviour less like that of the graceful, self-possessed Miss Lyon, whose phrases were usually so well turned, and whose repartees were so ready?

For a moment there was silence. Esther had her two little delicately gloved hands clasped on the table. The next moment she felt one hand of Felix covering them both and pressing them firmly; but he did not speak. The tears were both on her cheeks now, and she could look up at him. His eyes had an expression of sadness in them, quite new to her.

[*Mr. Lyon tells Esther that he is only her step-father, a fact which had been concealed from her.*]

Motionless, but mentally stirred as she had never been before, Esther listened to her mother's story, and to the outpouring of her step-father's long-pent-up experience. The rays of the morning sun which fell athwart the books, the sense of the beginning day, had deepened the solemnity more than night would have done. All knowledge which alters our lives penetrates us more when it comes in the early morning: the day that has to be travelled with something new and perhaps for ever sad in its light, is an image of the life that spreads beyond. But at night the time of rest is near. . . .

Esther had risen, and had glided on to the wooden stool on a level with her father's chair, where he was accustomed to lay books. She wanted to speak, but the floodgates could not be opened for words alone. She threw her arms round the old man's neck and sobbed out with a passionate cry, "Father, father! forgive me if I have not loved you enough. I will—I will!"

The old man's little delicate frame was shaken by a surprise and joy that were almost painful in their intensity. He had been going to ask forgiveness of her who asked it for herself. In that moment

of supreme complex emotion one ray of the minister's joy was the thought, "Surely the work of grace is begun in her—surely here is a heart that the Lord hath touched."

[*Felix Holt visits Esther.*]

Esther's cheeks were hot in spite of the breeze that sent her hair floating backward. She felt an inward strain, a demand on her to see things in a light that was not easy or soothing. When Felix had asked her to walk, he had seemed so kind, so alive to what might be her feelings, that she had thought herself nearer to him than she had ever been before; but since they had come out, he had appeared to forget all that. And yet she was conscious that this impatience of hers was very petty. Battling in this way with her own little impulses, and looking at the birch-stems opposite till her gaze was too wide for her to see anything distinctly, she was unaware how long they had remained without speaking. She did not know that Felix had changed his attitude a little, and was resting his elbow on the tree-trunk, while he supported his head, which was turned towards her. Suddenly he said, in a lower tone than was habitual to him:

"You are very beautiful. . . .

"I wonder," he went on, still looking at her, "whether the subtle measuring of forces will ever come to measure the force there would be in one beautiful woman whose mind was as noble as her face was beautiful—who made a man's passion for her rush in one current with all the great aims of his life."

Esther's eyes got hot and smarting. It was no

use trying to be dignified. She had turned away her head, and now said, rather bitterly, "It is difficult for a woman ever to try to be anything good when she is not believed in—when it is always supposed that she must be contemptible."

"No, dear Esther"—it was the first time Felix had been prompted to call her by her Christian name, and as he did so he laid his large hand on her two little hands, which were clasped on her knees. "You don't believe that I think you contemptible. When I first saw you——"

"I know, I know," said Esther, interrupting him impetuously, but still looking away. "You mean you did think me contemptible then. But it was very narrow of you to judge me in that way, when my life had been so different from yours. I have great faults. I know I am selfish, and think too much of my own small tastes and too little of what affects others. But I am not stupid. I am not unfeeling. I can see what is better."

"But I have not done you injustice since I knew more of you," said Felix gently.

"Yes, you have," said Esther, turning and smiling at him through her tears. "You talk to me like an angry pedagogue. Were *you* always wise? Remember the time when you were foolish or naughty."

"That is not far off," said Felix curtly, taking away his hand and clasping it with the other at the back of his head. The talk, which seemed to be introducing a mutual understanding, such as had not existed before, seemed to have undergone some check.

"Shall we get up and walk back now?" said Esther, after a few moments.

"No," said Felix entreatingly. "Don't move yet. I dare say we shall never walk together or sit here again."

"Why not?"

"Because I am a man who am warned by visions. Those old stories of visions and dreams guiding men have their truth: we are saved by making the future present to ourselves."

"I wish I could get visions, then," said Esther, smiling at him, with an effort at playfulness, in resistance to something vaguely mournful within her.

"That is what I want," said Felix, looking at her very earnestly. "Don't turn your head. Do look at me, and then I shall know if I may go on speaking. I do believe in you; but I want you to have such a vision of the future that you may never lose your best self." . . .

[*Felix comes to reassure Esther during all the riot and noise of the election.*]

"I want you to tell me—once—that you know it would be easier to me to give myself up to loving and being loved, as other men do, when they can than to——"

This breaking-off in speech was something quite new in Felix. For the first time he had lost his self-possession, and turned his eyes away. He was at variance with himself. He had begun what he felt that he ought not to finish.

Esther, like a woman as she was—a woman waiting for love, never able to ask for it—had her joy in these signs of her power; but they made her generous, not chary, as they might have done if she had had a

pettier disposition. She said, with deep yet timid earnestness :

" What you have chosen to do has only convinced me that your love would be the better worth having."

All the finest part of Esther's nature trembled in those words. To be right in great memorable moments, is perhaps the thing we need most desire for ourselves.

Felix as quick as lightning turned his look upon her again, and, leaning forward, took her sweet hand and held it to his lips some moments before he let it fall again and raised his head.

" We shall always be the better for thinking of each other," he said, leaning his elbow on the back of the sofa, and supporting his head as he looked at her with calm sadness. " This thing can never come to me twice over. It is my knighthood. That was always a business of great cost." . . .

She heard the doors close behind him, and felt free to be miserable. She cried bitterly. If she might have married Felix Holt, she could have been a good woman. She felt no trust that she could ever be good without him.

[*Felix sees a man in danger of his life from the mob. By joining the rioters and pretending to be one of them, he hopes to have an opportunity of saving the man's life.*]

Meanwhile the foremost among the constables, who, coming by the back way, had now reached the opening of Tiliot's Lane, discerned that the crowd had a victim amongst them. One spirited fellow, named Tucker, who was a regular constable, feeling that no time was to be lost in meditation, called on his neighbour to follow him, and with

the sabre that happened to be his weapon got a way for himself where he was not expected, by dint of quick resolution. At this moment Spratt had been let go—had been dropped, in fact, almost lifeless with terror, on the street stones, and the men round him had retreated for a little space, as if to amuse themselves with looking at him. Felix had taken his opportunity; and seeing the first step towards a plan he was bent on, he sprang forward close to the cowering Spratt. As he did this, Tucker had cut his way to the spot, and imagining Felix to be the destined executioner of Spratt—for any discrimination of Tucker's lay in his muscles rather than his eyes—he rushed up to Felix, meaning to collar him and throw him down. But Felix had rapid senses and quick thoughts; he discerned the situation; he chose between two evils. Quick as lightning he frustrated the constable, fell upon him, and tried to master his weapon. In the struggle, which was watched without interference, the constable fell undermost, and Felix got his weapon. He started up with the bare sabre in his hand. The crowd round him cried "Hurray!" with a sense that he was on their side against the constable. Tucker did not rise immediately; but Felix did not imagine that he was much hurt.

[*Felix still leads the rioters, hoping to keep them from harm-doing until the military arrive. He cannot prevent them, however, from going to Treby Manor.*]

The light was declining: already the candles shone through many windows of the Manor. Already the foremost part of the crowd had burst into the offices, and adroit men were busy in the right places to find

plate, after setting others to force the butler into unlocking the cellars; and Felix had only just been able to force his way on to the front terrace, with the hope of getting to the rooms where he would find the ladies of the household and comfort them with the assurance that rescue must soon come, when the sound of horses' feet convinced him that the rescue was nearer than he had expected. Just as he heard the horses, he had approached the large window of a room, where a brilliant light suspended from the ceiling showed him a group of women clinging together in terror. Others of the crowd were pushing their way up the terrace-steps and gravel-slopes at various points. Hearing the horses, he kept his post in front of the window, and, motioning with his sabre, cried out to the on-comers, "Keep back! I hear the soldiers coming." Some scrambled back, some paused automatically.

The louder and louder sound of the hoofs changed its pace and distribution. "Halt! Fire!" Bang! bang! bang!—came deafening the ears of the men on the terrace.

Before they had time or nerve to move, there was a rushing sound closer to them—again "Fire!" a bullet whizzed, and passed through Felix Holt's shoulder—the shoulder of the arm that held the naked weapon which shone in the light from the window.

Felix fell. The rioters ran confusedly, like terrified sheep. Some of the soldiers, turning, drove them along with the flat of their swords. The greater difficulty was to clear the invaded offices. . . .

It was a weary night; and the next day, Felix, whose wound was declared trivial, was lodged in Loamford Jail. He was committed on three counts—for having assaulted a constable, for having committed

manslaughter (Tucker was dead from spinal concussion), and for having led riotous onslaught on a dwelling-house.

[*Harold Transome has lost the election. Mr. Jermyn visits him.*]

"I have here information from a London correspondent that you are about to file a bill against me in Chancery." Jermyn, as he spoke, laid his hand on the papers before him, and looked straight at Harold.

"In that case the question for you is, how far your conduct as a family solicitor will bear investigation. But it is a question which you will consider quite apart from me."

"Doubtless. But prior to that there is a question which we must consider together."

The tone in which Jermyn said this gave an unpleasant shock to Harold's sense of mastery. Was it possible that he should have the weapon wrenched out of his hand?

"I shall know what to think of that," he replied, as haughtily as ever, "when you have stated what the question is."

"Simply, whether you will choose to retain the family estates, or lay yourself open to be forthwith legally deprived of them."

[*Mr. Jermyn explains that there is in existence a Bycliffe who is the true claimant to the estate. He threatens to act on this knowledge unless Harold undertakes to cancel the hostile proceedings against him. But Harold discovers that this claimant is Esther, and it occurs to him that he might escape his difficulties by marrying her.*]

He was helped to this determination by the pleasure of frustrating Jermyn's contrivance to shield himself from punishment ; and his most distinct and cheering prospect was, that within a very short space of time he should not only have effected a satisfactory compromise with Esther, but should have made Jermyn aware, by a very disagreeable form of announcement, that Harold Transome was no longer afraid of him. Jermyn should bite the dust.

[*He tells the story to his mother.*]

" Now, what I want you to do, mother, if you can see this matter as I see it," Harold said in conclusion, " is to go with me to call on this girl in Malthouse Yard. I will open the affair to her ; it appears she is not likely to have been informed yet ; and you will invite her to visit you here at once, that all scandal, all hatching of law-mischief, may be avoided, and the thing may be brought to an amicable conclusion."

" It seems almost incredible—extraordinary—a girl in her position," said Mrs. Transome, with difficulty. It would have seemed the bitterest humiliating penance if another sort of suffering had left any room in her heart.

[*She pleads with her son that he will never take proceedings againts Jermyn.*]

" Jermyn might be willing to arrange things amicably—to make restitution as far as he can—if he has done anything wrong."

" I will arrange nothing amicably with him," said Harold decisively. " If he has ever done anything scandalous as our agent, let him bear the infamy.

And the right way to throw the infamy on him is to show the world that he has robbed us, and that I mean to punish him. Why do you wish to shield such a fellow, mother? It has been chiefly through him that you have had to lead such a thrifty, miserable life—you who used to make as brilliant a figure as a woman need wish."

Mrs. Transome's rising temper was turned into a horrible sensation, as painful as a sudden concussion from something hard and immovable when we have struck out with our fist, intending to hit something warm, soft, and breathing, like ourselves. Poor Mrs. Transome's strokes were sent jarring back on her by a hard, unalterable past.

[*Esther is informed of her true position.*]

Felix Holt was present in her mind throughout: what he would say was an imaginary commentary that she was constantly framing, and the words that she most frequently gave him—for she dramatised under the inspiration of a sadness slightly bitter—were of this kind: "That is clearly your destiny—to be aristocratic, to be rich. I always saw that our lots lay widely apart. You are not fit for poverty, or any work of difficulty. But remember what I once said to you about a vision of consequences; take care where your fortune leads you."

[*Mr. Transome and Harold call.*]

"And this is what I have come to beg of you," said Mrs. Transome. "It is that you will come to Transome Court—and let us take full time to arrange matters. Do oblige me: you shall not be teased

more than you like by an old woman: you shall do just as you please, and become acquainted with your future home, since it is to be yours. I can tell you a world of things that you will want to know; and the business can proceed properly."

"Do consent," said Harold, with winning brevity.

Esther was flushed, and her eyes were bright. It was impossible for her not to feel that the proposal was a more tempting step towards her change of condition than she could have thought of beforehand.

* * * * *

In spite of all the grave thoughts that had been, Esther felt it a very pleasant as well as new experience to be led to the carriage by Harold Transome, to be seated on soft cushions, and bowled along, looked at admiringly and deferentially by a person opposite, whom it was agreeable to look at in return, and talked to with suavity and liveliness. Towards what prospect was that easy carriage really leading her? She could not be always asking herself Mentor-like questions. Her young bright nature was rather weary of the sadness that had grown heavier in these last weeks, like a chill white mist hopelessly veiling the day. Her fortune was beginning to appear worthy of being called good fortune. She had come to a new stage in her journey; a new day had arisen on new scenes, and her young untried spirit was full of curiosity.

[*Esther is happy at Transome Court.*]

Harold raised the hand to his lips, but dared not retain it more than an instant. Still the sweet reliance in Esther's manner made an irresistible temptation to him. After standing still a moment or

two, while she bent over her work, he glided to the ottoman and seated himself close by her, looking at her busy hands.

"I see you have made mistakes in your work," he said, bending still nearer, for he saw that she was conscious, yet not angry.

"Nonsense! you know nothing about it," said Esther, laughing, and crushing up the soft silk under her palms. "Those blunders have a design in them."

She looked round, and saw a handsome face very near her. Harold was looking, as he felt, thoroughly enamoured of this bright woman, who was not at all to his preconceived taste. Perhaps a touch of hypothetic jealousy now helped to heighten the effect. But he mastered all indiscretion, and only looked at her as he said:

"I am wondering whether you have any deep wishes and secrets that I can't guess."

"Pray don't speak of my wishes," said Esther, quite overmastered by this new and apparently involuntary manifestation in Harold; "I could not possibly tell you one at this moment—I think I shall never find them out again. Oh, yes," she said abruptly, struggling to relieve herself from the oppression of unintelligible feelings—"I do know one wish distinctly. I want to go and see my father. He writes me word that all is well with him, but still I want to see him."

[*Jermyn is again anxious as to Harold's proceedings against him. He speaks to Mrs. Transome.*]

"You could save me if you would. It is not to be supposed that Harold would go on against me . . . if he knew the whole truth." . . .

As Jermyn, sitting down and leaning forward with an elbow on his knee, uttered his last words—"if he knew the whole truth"—a slight shock seemed to pass through Mrs. Transome's hitherto motionless body, followed by a sudden light in her eyes, as in an animal's about to spring.

"And you expect me to tell him?" she said, not loudly, but yet with a clear metallic ring in her voice.

"Would it not be right for him to know?" said Jermyn, in a more bland and persuasive tone than he had yet used.

Perhaps some of the most terrible irony of the human lot is this of a deep truth coming to be uttered by lips that have no right to it.

"I will never tell him!" said Mrs. Transome, starting up, her whole frame thrilled with a passion that seemed almost to make her young again. . . .

"From the first, after Harold came home, I had a horrible dread. It seemed as if murder might come between you—I didn't know what. I felt the horror of his not knowing the truth. I might have been dragged at last, by my own feelings—by my own memory—to tell him all, and make him as well as myself miserable, to save you."

Again there was a slight tremor, as if at the remembrance of womanly tenderness and pity. But immediately she launched forth again.

"But now you have asked me, I will never tell him! Be ruined—no—do something more dastardly to save yourself. If I sinned, my judgment went beforehand—that I should sin for a man like you."

Swiftly upon those last words Mrs. Transome passed out of the room. The softly-padded door closed behind her making no noise, and Jermyn found himself alone.

* * * * *

The Loamford Assizes were approaching; it was expected that in about ten days Felix Holt's trial would come on, and some hints in her father's letters had given Esther the impression that he was taking a melancholy view of the result. Harold Transome had once or twice mentioned the subject with a facile hopefulness as to "the young fellow's coming off easily," which, in her anxious mind, was not a counterpoise to disquieting suggestions, and she had not chosen to introduce another conversation about Felix Holt, by questioning Harold concerning the probabilities he relied on. Since those moments on the terrace, Harold had daily become more of the solicitous and indirectly beseeching lover; and Esther, from the very fact that she was weighed on by thoughts that were painfully bewildering to her —by thoughts which, in their newness to her young mind, seemed to shake her belief that life could be anything else than a compromise with things repugnant to the moral taste—had become more passive to his attentions at the very time that she had begun to feel more profoundly that in accepting Harold Transome she left the high mountain air, the passionate serenity of perfect love for ever behind her, and must adjust her wishes to a life of middling delights, overhung with the languorous haziness of motiveless ease, where poetry was only literature, and the fine ideas had to be taken down from the shelves of the library when her husband's back was turned. But it seemed as if all outward conditions concurred, along with her generous sympathy for the Transomes, and with those native tendencies against which she had once begun to struggle, to make this middling lot the best she could attain to.

[*Just before the trial Esther goes with her father to see Felix in prison.*]

"Do you see things just as you used to do?" said Esther, turning pale as she said it—"I mean—about poverty, and the people you will live among. Has all the misunderstanding and sadness left you just as obstinate?" She tried to smile, but could not succeed.

"What—about the sort of life I should lead if I were free again?" said Felix.

"Yes. I can't help being discouraged for you by all these things that have happened. See how you may fail!" Esther spoke timidly. She saw a peculiar smile, which she knew well, gathering in his eyes. "Ah, I dare say I am silly," she said deprecatingly.

"No, you are dreadfully inspired," said Felix. "When the wicked Tempter is tired of snarling that word failure in a man's cell, he sends a voice like a thrush to say it for him. See now what a messenger of darkness you are!" He smiled, and took her two hands between his, pressed together as children hold them up in prayer. Both of them felt too solemnly to be bashful. They looked straight into each other's eyes, as angels do when they tell some truth. And they stood in that way while he went on speaking.

"But I'm proof against that word failure. I've seen behind it. The only failure a man ought to fear is failure in cleaving to the purpose he sees to be best." . . .

"My children," said Mr. Lyon at this moment, not looking round, but only looking close at his watch, "we have just two minutes more." Then he went on writing.

Esther did not speak, but Felix could not help observing now that her hands had turned to a deathly coldness, and that she was trembling. He believed, he knew, that whatever prospects she had, this feeling was for his sake. An overpowering impulse from mingled love, gratitude, and anxiety, urged him to say :

" I had a horrible struggle, Esther. But you see I was right. There was a fitting lot in reserve for you. But remember you have cost a great price—don't throw what is precious away. I shall want the news that you have a happiness worthy of you."

Esther felt too miserable for tears to come. She looked helplessly at Felix for a moment, then took her hands from his, and, turning away mutely, walked dreamily towards her father, and said, " Father, I am ready—there is no more to say."

She turned back again, towards the chair where her bonnet lay, with a face quite corpse-like above her dark garment.

" Esther ! "

She heard Felix say the word, with an entreating cry, and went towards him with the swift movement of a frightened child towards its protector. He clasped her, and they kissed each other.

She never could recall anything else that happened, till she was in the carriage again with Mrs. Transome.

[*In the Court. Evidence has been given for the defence.*]

She [Esther] could not support the thought that the trial would come to an end, that sentence would be passed on Felix, and that all the while something had been omitted which might have been said for

him. There had been no witness to tell what had been his behaviour and state of mind just before the riot. She must do it. It was possible. There was time. But not too much time. All other agitation became merged in eagerness not to let the moment escape. The last witness was being called. Harold Transome had not been able to get back to her on leaving the witness-box, but Mr. Lingnon was close by her. With firm quickness she said to him:

"Pray tell the attorney that I have evidence to give for the prisoner—lose no time."

* * * * *

At the first moment Harold was startled and alarmed; the next, he felt delight in Esther's beautiful aspect, and in the admiration of the Court. There was no blush on her face: she stood, divested of all personal considerations whether of vanity or shyness. Her clear voice sounded as it might have done if she had been making a confession of faith. She began and went on without query or interruption. Every face looked grave and respectful.

"I am Esther Lyon, the daughter of Mr. Lyon, the Independent minister at Treby, who has been one of the witnesses for the prisoner. I know Felix Holt well. On the day of the election at Treby, when I had been much alarmed by the noises that reached me from the main street, Felix Holt came to call upon me. He knew that my father was away, and he thought that I should be alarmed by the sounds of disturbance. It was about the middle of the day, and he came to tell me that the disturbance was quieted, and that the streets were nearly emptied. But he said he feared that the men would collect again after drinking, and that something worse might happen later in the day. And he was in much sadness at

this thought. He stayed a little while, and then he left me. He was very melancholy. His mind was full of great resolutions that came from his kind feeling towards others. It was the last thing he would have done to join in riot or to hurt any man, if he could have helped it. His nature is very noble; he is tender-hearted; he could never have had any intention that was not brave and good."

* * * * *

Though she could not follow the address of the counsel or the judge, she had a keen ear for what was brief and decisive. She heard the verdict, "Guilty of manslaughter." And every word uttered by the judge in pronouncing sentence fell upon her like an unforgettable sound that would come back in dreaming and in waking. She had her eyes on Felix, and at the words, "Imprisonment for four years," she saw his lip tremble. But otherwise he stood firm and calm.

Esther gave a start from her seat. Her heart swelled with a horrible sensation of pain; but, alarmed lest she should lose her self-command, she grasped Mrs. Transome's hand, getting some strength from that human contact.

[*There is a meeting of leading men to discuss a petition for Felix Holt's release. To this meeting Mr. Jermyn comes to ask Harold Transome for a private interview.*]

"You will repent else—for your mother's sake."

At that sound, quick as a leaping flame, Harold had struck Jermyn across the face with his whip. The brim of the hat had been a defence. Jermyn, a powerful man, had instantly thrust out his hand

and clutched Harold hard by the clothes just below the throat, pushing him slightly so as to make him stagger.

By this time everybody's attention had been called to this end of the room, but both Jermyn and Harold were beyond being arrested by any consciousness of spectators.

"Let me go, you scoundrel!" said Harold fiercely, "or I'll be the death of you."

"Do," said Jermyn, in a grating voice; "*I am your father.*"

[*Harold goes to his mother.*]

He paused a moment, and then said, "Who is my father?"

She was mute: her lips only trembled. Harold stood silent for a few moments, as if waiting. Then he spoke again.

"*He* has said—said it before others—that *he* is my father."

He looked still at his mother. She seemed as if age were striking her with a sudden wand—as if her trembling face were getting haggard before him. She was mute. But her eyes had not fallen; they looked up in helpless misery at her son.

[*Harold tells Esther that, though he loves her, he can no longer entertain the wish to marry her.*]

It seemed natural that soon afterward Esther put out her hand and said, "Good-night."

Harold went to his bedroom on the same level with his study, thinking of the morning with an uncertainty that dipped on the side of hope. This

sweet woman, for whom he felt a passion newer than any he had expected to feel, might possibly make some hard things more bearable—if she loved him. If not—well, he had acted so that he could defy any one to say he was not a gentleman.

[*Esther does not sleep, but is full of doubt as to her future course. She finds Mrs. Transome in the passage.*]

As Mrs. Transome felt that soft clinging, she said "God has some pity on me."

"Rest on my bed," said Esther. "You are so tired. I will cover you up warmly, and then you will sleep."

"No—tell me, dear—tell me what Harold said."

"That he has had some new trouble."

"He said nothing hard about me?"

"No—nothing. He did not mention you."

"I have been an unhappy woman, dear."

"I feared it," said Esther, pressing her gently.

"Men are selfish. They are selfish and cruel. What they care for is their own pleasure and their own pride."

"Not all," said Esther, on whom these words fell with a painful jar.

"All I have ever loved," said Mrs. Transome. She paused a moment or two, and then said, "For more than twenty years I have not had an hour's happiness. Harold knows it, and yet he is hard to me."

"He will not be. To-morrow he will not be. I am sure he will be good," said Esther pleadingly. "Remember—he said to me his trouble was new—he has not had time."

"It is too hard to bear, dear," Mrs. Transome said, a new sob rising as she clung fast to Esther in return. "I am old, and expect so little now—a very little thing would seem great. Why should I be punished any more?"

[*In the morning Esther summons Harold.*]

"There is nothing in all this place—nothing since ever I came here—I could care for so much as that you should sit down by her now, and that she should see you when she wakes."

Then with delicate instinct, she added, just laying her hand on his sleeve, "I know you would have come. I know you meant it. But she is asleep now. Go gently before she wakes."

Harold just laid his right hand for an instant on the back of Esther's as it rested on his sleeve, and then stepped softly to his mother's bedside.

An hour afterwards, when Harold had laid his mother's pillow afresh, and sat down again by her, she said:

"If that dear thing will marry you, Harold, it will make up to you for a great deal."

But before the day closed Harold knew that this was not to be. That young presence, which had flitted like a white new-winged dove over all the saddening relics and new finery of Transome Court, could not find its home there. Harold heard from Esther's lips that she loved some one else, and that she resigned all claim to the Transome estates.

She wished to go back to her father.

[*Esther is at home, and Felix, having been released from prison, suddenly comes to the door.*]

"Are you come back to live here then?"

"Yes."

"You are not going to be married to Harold Transome, or to be rich?"

"No." Something made Esther take up her work again, and begin to stitch. The smiles were dying into a tremor.

"Why?" said Felix, in rather a low tone, leaning his elbow on the table, and resting his head on his hand while he looked at her.

"I did not wish to marry him, or to be rich."

"You have given it all up?" said Felix, leaning forward a little, and speaking in a still lower tone.

Esther did not speak. They heard the kettle singing and the clock loudly ticking. There was no knowing how it was: Esther's work fell, their eyes met; and the next instant their arms were round each other's necks, and once more they kissed each other.

When their hands fell again, their eyes were bright with tears. Felix laid his hand on her shoulder.

"Could you share the life of a poor man, then, Esther?"

"If I thought well enough of him," she said, the smile coming again, with the pretty saucy movement of her head.

Middlemarch

"DOROTHEA, dear, if you don't mind—if you are not very busy—suppose we looked at mamma's jewels to-day, and divided them? It is exactly six months to-day since uncle gave them to you, and you have not looked at them yet."

Celia's face had the shadow of a pouting expression in it, the full presence of the pout being kept back by an habitual awe of Dorothea and principle; two associated facts which might show a mysterious electricity if you touched them incautiously. To her relief, Dorothea's eyes were full of laughter as she looked up.

"What a wonderful little almanac you are, Celia! Is it six calendar or six lunar months?"

"It is the last day of September now, and it was the first of April when uncle gave them to you. You know, he said that he had forgotten them till then. I believe you have never thought of them since you locked them up in the cabinet there."

"Well, dear, we should never wear them, you know." Dorothea spoke in a full cordial tone, half caressing, half explanatory. She had her pencil in her hand, and was making tiny side-plans on a margin.

Celia coloured, and looked very grave. "I think, dear, we are wanting in respect to mamma's memory, to put them by and take no notice of them. And," she added, after hesitating a little, with a rising sob

of mortification, "necklaces are quite usual now; and Madame Poinçon, who was stricter in some things even than you are, used to wear ornaments. And Christians generally—surely there are women in heaven now who wore jewels." Celia was conscious of some mental strength when she really applied herself to argument.

"You would like to wear them?" exclaimed Dorothea, an air of astonished discovery animating her whole person with a dramatic action which she had caught from that very Madame Poinçon who wore the ornaments. "Of course, then, let us have them out. Why did you not tell me before? But the keys, the keys!" She pressed her hands against the sides of her head and seemed to despair of her memory.

"They are here," said Celia, with whom this explanation had been long meditated and prearranged.

"Pray open the large drawer of the cabinet and get out the jewel-box."

The casket was soon open before them, and the various jewels spread out, making a bright parterre on the table. It was no great collection, but a few of the ornaments were really of remarkable beauty, the finest that were obvious at first being a necklace of purple amethysts set in exquisite gold work, and a pearl cross with five brilliants in it. Dorothea immediately took up the necklace and fastened it round her sister's neck, where it fitted almost as closely as a bracelet; but the circle suited the Henrietta-Maria style of Celia's head and neck, and she could see that it did, in the pier-glass opposite.

"There, Celia! you can wear that with your Indian muslin. But this cross you must wear with your dark dresses."

Celia was trying not to smile with pleasure. "Oh Dodo, you must keep the cross yourself."

"No, no, dear, no," said Dorothea, putting up her hand with careless deprecation.

"Yes, indeed you must; it would suit you—in your black dress, now," said Celia insistently. "You *might* wear that."

"Not for the world, not for the world. A cross is the last thing I would wear as a trinket." Dorothea shuddered slightly.

"Then you will think it wicked in me to wear it," said Celia, uneasily.

"No, dear, no," said Dorothea, stroking her sister's cheek. "Souls have complexions too: what will suit one will not suit another."

"But you might like to keep it for mamma's sake."

"No, I have other things of mamma's—her sandal-wood box which I am so fond of—plenty of things. In fact, they are all yours, dear. We need discuss them no longer. There—take away your property."

Celia felt a little hurt. There was a strong assumption of superiority in this Puritanic toleration, hardly less trying to the blond flesh of an unenthusiastic sister than a Puritanic persecution.

"But how can I wear ornaments if you, who are the elder sister, will never wear them?"

"Nay, Celia, that is too much to ask, that I should wear trinkets to keep you in countenance. If I were to put on such a necklace as that, I should feel as if I had been pirouetting. The world would go round with me, and I should not know how to walk."

Celia had unclasped the necklace and drawn it off. "It would be a little tight for your neck; something to lie down and hang would suit you better," she said, with some satisfaction. The complete unfitness of

the necklace from all points of view for Dorothea, made Celia happier in taking it. She was opening some ring-boxes, which disclosed a fine emerald with diamonds, and just then the sun passing beyond a cloud sent a bright gleam over the table.

"How very beautiful these gems are!" said Dorothea, under a new current of feeling, as sudden as the gleam. "It is strange how deeply colours seem to penetrate one, like scent. I suppose that is the reason why gems are used as spiritual emblems in the Revelation of St. John. They look like fragments of heaven. I think that emerald is more beautiful than any of them."

"And there is a bracelet to match it," said Celia. "We did not notice this at first."

"They are lovely," said Dorothea, slipping the ring and bracelet on her finely turned finger and wrist, and holding them towards the window on a level with her eyes. All the while her thought was trying to justify her delight in the colours by merging them in her mystic religious joy.

"You *would* like those, Dorothea," said Celia, rather falteringly, beginning to think with wonder that her sister showed some weakness, and also that emeralds would suit her own complexion even better than purple amethysts. "You must keep that ring and bracelet—if nothing else. But see, these agates are very pretty—and quiet."

"Yes! I will keep these—this ring and bracelet," said Dorothea. Then, letting her hand fall on the table, she said in another tone—"Yet what miserable men find such things, and work at them, and sell them!" She paused again, and Celia thought that her sister was going to renounce the ornaments, as in consistency she ought to do.

"Yes, dear, I will keep these," said Dorothea, decidedly. "But take all the rest away, and the casket."

She took up her pencil without removing the jewels, and still looking at them. She thought of often having them by her, to feed her eye at these little fountains of pure colour.

"Shall you wear them in company?" said Celia, who was watching her with real curiosity as to what she would do.

Dorothea glanced quickly at her sister. Across all her imaginative adornment of those whom she loved, there darted now and then a keen discernment, which was not without a scorching quality. If Miss Brooke ever attained perfect meakness, it would not be for lack of inward fire.

"Perhaps," she said, rather haughtily. "I cannot tell to what level I may sink."

Celia blushed, and was unhappy: she saw that she had offended her sister, and dared not say even anything pretty about the gift of the ornaments which she put back into the box and carried away. Dorothea too was unhappy, as she went on with her plan-drawing, questioning the purity of her own feeling and speech in the scene which had ended with that little explosion.

Celia's consciousness told her that she had not been at all in the wrong: it was quite natural and justifiable that she should have asked that question, and she repeated to herself that Dorothea was inconsistent: either she should have taken her full share of the jewels, or, after what she had said, she should have renounced them altogether.

"I am sure—at least, I trust," thought Celia, "that the wearing of a necklace will not interfere with my

prayers. And I do not see that I should be bound by Dorothea's opinions now we are going into society, though of course she herself ought to be bound by them. But Dorothea is not always consistent."

Thus Celia, mutely bending over her tapestry, until she heard her sister calling her.

"Here, Kitty, come and look at my plan; I shall think I am a great architect, if I have not got incompatible stairs and fireplaces."

As Celia bent over the paper, Dorothea put her cheek against her sister's arm caressingly. Celia understood the action. Dorothea saw that she had been in the wrong, and Celia pardoned her. Since they could remember, there had been a mixture of criticism and awe in the attitude of Celia's mind towards her elder sister. The younger had always worn a yoke; but is there any yoked creature without its private opinions?

* * * * *

The Mrs. Waule who was so far from being admirable in the eyes of these distant connections, had happened to say this very morning (not at all with a defiant air, but in a low, muffled, neutral tone, as of a voice heard through cotton wool) that she did not wish "to enjoy their good opinion." She was seated, as she observed, on her own brother's hearth, and had been Jane Featherstone five-and-twenty years before she had been Jane Waule, which entitled her to speak when her own brother's name had been made free with by those who had no right to it.

"What are you driving at there?" said Mr. Featherstone, holding his stick between his knees and settling his wig, while he gave her a momentary sharp glance, which seemed to react on him like a draught of cold air and set him coughing.

Mrs. Waule had to defer her answer till he was quiet again, till Mary Garth had supplied him with fresh syrup, and he had begun to rub the gold knob of his stick, looking bitterly at the fire. It was a bright fire, but it made no difference to the chill-looking purplish tint of Mrs. Waule's face, which was as neutral as her voice; having mere chinks for eyes, and lips that hardly moved in speaking.

"The doctors can't master that cough, brother. It's just like what I have; for I'm your own sister, constitution and everything. But, as I was saying, it's a pity Mrs. Vincy's family can't be better conducted."

"Tchah! you said nothing o' the sort. You said somebody had made free with my name."

"And no more than can be proved, if what everybody says is true. My brother Solomon tells me it's the talk up and down in Middlemarch how unsteady young Vincy is, and has been for ever gambling at billiards since home he came."

"Nonsense! What's a game at billiards? It's a good gentlemanly game; and young Vincy is not a clodhopper. If your son John took to billiards, now, he'd make a fool of himself."

"Your nephew John never took to billiards or any other game, brother, and is far from losing hundreds of pounds, which, if what everybody says is true, must be found somewhere else than out of Mr. Vincy the father's pocket. For they say he's been losing money for years, though nobody would think so, to see him go coursing and keeping open house as they do. And I've heard say Mr. Bulstrode condemns Mrs. Vincy beyond anything for her flightiness, and spoiling her children so."

"What's Bulstrode to me? I don't bank with him."

"Well, Mrs. Bulstrode is Mrs. Vincy's own sister, and they do say that Mr. Vincy mostly trades on the bank money; and you may see yourself, brother, when a woman past forty has pink strings always flying, and that light way of laughing at everything, it's very unbecoming. But indulging your children is one thing, and finding money to pay their debts is another. And it's openly said that young Vincy has raised money on his expectations. I don't say what expectations. Miss Garth hears me, and is welcome to tell again. I know young people hang together."

"No, thank you, Mrs. Waule," said Mary Garth. "I dislike hearing scandal too much to wish to repeat it."

Mr. Featherstone rubbed the knob of his stick and made a brief convulsive show of laughter, which had much the same genuineness as an old whist-player's chuckle over a bad hand. Still looking at the fire, he said—

"And who pretends to say Fred Vincy hasn't got expectations? Such a fine, spirited fellow is like enough to have 'em."

There was a slight pause before Mrs. Waule replied, and when she did so, her voice seemed to be slightly moistened with tears, though her face was still dry.

"Whether or no, brother, it is naturally painful to me and my brother Solomon to hear your name made free with, and your complaint being such as may carry you off sudden, and people who are no more Featherstones than the Merry-Andrew at the fair, openly reckoning on your property coming to *them*. And me your own sister, and Solomon your own brother! And if that's to be it, what has it pleased the Almighty to make families for?" Here Mrs. Waule's tears fell, but with moderation.

ONE instance in which Grandcourt stimulated a feeling in Gwendolen that he would have liked to suppress without seeming to care about it, had relation to Mirah. Gwendolen's inclination lingered over the project of the singing lessons as a sort of obedience to Deronda's advice, but day followed day with that want of perceived leisure which belongs to lives where there is no work to mark off intervals ; and the continual liability to Grandcourt's presence and surveillance seemed to flatten every effort to the level of the boredom which his manner expressed : his negative mind was as diffusive as fog, clinging to all objects, and spoiling all contact.

But one morning when they were breakfasting, Gwendolen, in a recurrent fit of determination to exercise her old spirit, said, dallying prettily over her prawns without eating them—

" I think of making myself accomplished while we are in town, and having singing lessons."

" Why ? " said Grandcourt, languidly.

" Why ? " echoed Gwendolen, playing at sauciness, " because I can't eat *pâté de foie gras* to make me sleepy, and I can't smoke, and I can't go to the club to make me like to come away again—I want a variety of *ennui*. What would be the most convenient time, when you are busy with your lawyers and people, for me to have lessons from that little Jewess, whose singing is getting all the rage ? "

" Whenever you like," said Grandcourt, pushing away his plate, and leaning back in his chair while he looked at her with his most lizard-like expression,

and played with the ears of the tiny spaniel on his lap (Gwendolen had taken a dislike to the dogs because they fawned on him).

Then he said, languidly, "I don't see why a lady should sing. Amateurs make fools of themselves. A lady can't risk herself in that way in company. And one doesn't want to hear squalling in private."

"I like frankness: that seems to me a husband's great charm," said Gwendolen, with her little upward movement of her chin, as she turned her eyes away from his, and lifting a prawn before her, looked at the boiled ingenuousness of its eyes as preferable to the lizard's. "But," she added, having devoured her mortification, "I suppose you don't object to Miss Lapidoth's singing at our party on the 4th? I thought of engaging her. Lady Brackenshaw has her, you know; and the Raymonds, who are very particular about their music. And Mr. Deronda, who is a musician himself, and a first-rate judge, says that there is no singing in such good taste as hers for a drawing-room. I think his opinion is an authority."

She meant to sling a small stone at her husband in that way.

"It's very indecent of Deronda to go about praising that girl," said Grandcourt, in a tone of indifference.

"Indecent!" exclaimed Gwendolen, reddening and looking at him again, overcome by startled wonder, and unable to reflect on the probable falsity of the phrase—"to go about praising."

"Yes; and especially when she is patronised by Lady Mallinger. He ought to hold his tongue about her. Men can see what is his relation to her."

"Men who judge of others by themselves," said Gwendolen, turning white after her redness, and immediately smitten with a dread of her own words.

"Of course. And a woman should take their judgment—else she is likely to run her head into the wrong place," said Grandcourt, conscious of using pincers on the white creature. "I suppose you take Deronda for a saint."

"Oh dear no!" said Gwendolen, summoning desperately her almost miraculous power of self-control, and speaking in a high, hard tone. "Only a little less of a monster."

She rose, pushed her chair away without hurry, and walked out of the room with something like the care of a man who is afraid of showing that he has taken more wine than usual. She turned the keys inside her dressing-room doors, and sat down for some time looking as pale and quiet as when she was leaving the breakfast-room. Even in the moments after reading the poisonous letter she had hardly had more cruel sensations than now; for emotion was at the acute point, where it is not distinguishable from sensation. Deronda unlike what she had believed him to be, was an image which affected her as a hideous apparition would have done, quite apart from the way in which it was produced. It had taken hold of her as pain before she could consider whether it were fiction or truth; and further to hinder her power of resistance came the sudden perception, how very slight were the grounds of her faith in Deronda—how little she knew of his life—how childish she had been in her confidence. His rebukes and his severity to her began to seem odious, along with all the poetry and lofty doctrine in the world, whatever it might be; and the grave beauty of his face seemed the most unpleasant mask that the common habits of men could put on.

All this went on in her with the rapidity of a sick

dream ; and her start into resistance was very much like a waking. Suddenly from out the grey sombre morning there came a stream of sunshine, wrapping her in warmth and light where she sat in stony stillness. She moved gently and looked around her—there was a world outside this bad dream, and the dream proved nothing ; she rose, stretching her arms upward and clasping her hands with her habitual attitude when she was seeking relief from oppressive feeling, and walked about the room in this flood of sunbeams.

" It is not true ! What does it matter whether *he* believes it or not ? " This was what she repeated to herself—but this was not her faith come back again ; it was only the desperate cry of faith, finding suffocation intolerable. And how could she go on through the day in this state ? With one of her impetuous alternations, her imagination flew to wild actions by which she would convince herself of what she wished : she would go to Lady Mallinger and question her about Mirah ; she would write to Deronda and upbraid him with making the world all false and wicked and hopeless to her—to him she dared pour out all the bitter indignation of her heart. No ; she would go to Mirah. This last form taken by her need was more definitely practicable, and quickly became imperious. No matter what came of it. She had the pretext of asking Mirah to sing at her party on the 4th. What was she going to say besides ? How satisfy herself ? She did not foresee—she could not want to foresee. If that idea which was maddening her had been a living thing, she would have wanted to throttle it without waiting to foresee what would come of the act. She rung her bell and asked if Mr. Grandcourt were gone out : finding that he was, she

ordered the carriage, and began to dress for the drive ; then she went down, and walked about the large drawing-room like an imprisoned dumb creature, not recognising herself in the glass panels, not noting any object around her in the painted gilded prison. Her husband would probably find out where she had been, and punish her in some way or other—no matter—she could neither desire nor fear anything just now but the assurance that she had not been deluding herself in her trust.

* * * * *

There had been a long silence. Deronda had stood still, even thankful for an interval before he needed to say more, and Gwendolen had sat like a statue with her wrists lying over each other and her eyes fixed—the intensity of her mental action arresting all other excitation. At length something occurred to her that made her turn her face to Deronda and say in a trembling voice—

" Is that all you can tell me ? "

The question was like a dart to him. " The Jew whom I mentioned just now," he answered, not without a certain tremor in his tones too, " the remarkable man who has greatly influenced my mind, has not perhaps been totally unheard of by you. He is the brother of Miss Lapidoth, whom you have often heard sing."

A great wave of remembrance passed through Gwendolen and spread as a deep, painful flush over face and neck. It had come first as the scene of that morning when she had called on Mirah, and heard Deronda's voice reading, and been told, without then heeding it, that he was reading Hebrew with Mirah's brother.

" He is very ill—very near death now," Deronda

went on, nervously, then stopped short. He felt that he must wait. Would she divine the rest?

"Did she tell you that I went to her?" said Gwendolen, abruptly, looking up at him.

"No," said Deronda. "I don't understand you."

She turned away her eyes again, and sat thinking. Slowly the colour died out of face and neck, and she was as pale as before—with that almost withered paleness which is seen after a painful flush. At last she said, without turning towards him—in a low, measured voice, as if she were only thinking aloud in preparation for future speech—

"But *can* you marry?"

"Yes," said Deronda, also in a low voice. "I am going to marry."

At first there was no change in Gwendolen's attitude: she only began to tremble visibly; then she looked before her with dilated eyes, as at something lying in front of her, till she stretched her arms out straight, and cried with a smothered voice—

"I said I should be forsaken. I have been a cruel woman. And I am forsaken."

Deronda's anguish was intolerable. He could not help himself. He seized her outstretched hands, and held them together, and kneeled at her feet. She was the victim of his happiness.

"I am cruel too, I am cruel," he repeated, with a sort of groan, looking up at her imploringly.

His presence and touch seemed to dispel a horrible vision, and she met his upward look of sorrow with something like the return of consciousness after fainting. Then she dwelt on it with that growing pathetic movement of the brow which accompanies the revival of some tender recollection. The look of sorrow brought back what seemed a very far-off

moment—the first moment she had ever seen it, in the library at the Abbey. Sobs rose, and great tears fell fast. Deronda would not let her hands go—held them still with one of his and himself pressed her handkerchief against her eyes. She submitted like a half-soothed child, making an effort to speak, which was hindered by struggling sobs. At last she succeeded in saying brokenly—

"I said . . . I said . . . it should be better . . . better with me . . . for having known you."

His eyes too were larger with tears. She wrested one of her hands from his, and returned his action, pressing his tears away.

"We shall not be quite parted," he said. "I will write to you always, when I can, and you will answer?" He waited till she said in a whisper, "I will try."

"I shall be more with you than I used to be," Deronda said with gentle urgency, releasing her hands and rising from his kneeling posture. "If we had been much together before, we should have felt our differences more, and seemed to get farther apart. Now we can perhaps never see each other again. But our minds may get nearer."

Gwendolen said nothing, but rose too, automatically. Her withered look of grief, such as the sun often shines on when the blinds are drawn up after the burial of life's joy, made him hate his own words: they seemed to have the hardness of easy consolation in them. She felt that he was going, and that nothing could hinder it. The sense of it was like a dreadful whisper in her ear, which dulled all other consciousness; and she had not known that she was rising.

Deronda could not speak again. He thought that they must part in silence, but it was difficult to move towards the parting, till she looked at him with a

sort of intention in her eyes, which helped him. He advanced to put out his hand silently, and when she had placed hers within it, she said what her mind had been labouring with—

"You have been very good to me. I have deserved nothing. I will try—try to live. I shall think of you. What good have I been? Only harm. Don't let me be harm to *you*. It shall be the better for me——"

She could not finish. It was not that she was sobbing, but that the intense effort with which she spoke made her too tremulous. The burthen of that difficult rectitude towards him was a weight her frame tottered under.

She bent forward to kiss his cheek, and he kissed hers. Then they looked at each other for an instant with clasped hands, and he turned away.

When he was quite gone, her mother came in and found her sitting motionless.

"Gwendolen, dearest, you look very ill," she said bending over her and touching her cold hands.

"Yes, mamma. But don't be afraid. I am going to live," said Gwendolen, bursting out hysterically.

Her mother persuaded her to go to bed, and watched by her. Through the day and half the night she fell continually into fits of shrieking, but cried in the midst of them to her mother, "Don't be afraid. I shall live. I mean to live."

After all, she slept; and when she waked in the morning light, she looked up fixedly at her mother and said tenderly, "Ah, poor mamma! You have been sitting up with me. Don't be unhappy. I shall live. I shall be better."

The Legend of Jubal

MAN'S life was spacious in the early world :
It paused, like some slow ship with sail unfurled
Waiting in seas by scarce a wavelet curled ;
Beheld the slow star-paces of the skies,
And grew from strength to strength through centuries ;
Saw infant trees fill out their giant limbs,
And heard a thousand times the sweet birds' marriage hymns.

[*Learning that death is the portion of man, the three sons of Lamech desire to "fashion arts" that will survive them.*]

Now Jabal learned to tame the lowing kine,
And from their udders drew the snow-white wine
That stirs the innocent joy, and makes the stream
Of elemental life with fulness teem ;
The star-browed calves he nursed with feeding hand,
And sheltered them, till all the little band
Stood mustered gazing at the sunset way
Whence he would come with store at close of day.
He soothed the silly sheep with friendly tone
And reared their staggering lambs that, older grown,
Followed his steps with sense-taught memory ;
Till he, their shepherd, could their leader be
And guide them through the pastures as he would,
With sway that grew from ministry of good.
He spread his tents upon the grassy plain
Which, eastward widening like the open main,

Showed the first whiteness 'neath the morning star ;
Near him his sister, deft, as women are,
Plied her quick skill in sequence to his thought
Till the hid treasures of the milk she caught
Revealed live pollen 'mid the petals white,
The golden pollen, virgin to the light.
Even the she-wolf with young, on rapine bent,
He caught and tethered in his mat-walled tent,
And cherished all her little sharp-nosed young
Till the small race with hope and terror clung
About his footsteps, till each new-reared brood,
Remoter from the memories of the wood,
More glad discerned their common home with man.
This was the work of Jabal : he began
The pastoral life, and sire of joys to be,
Spread the sweet ties that bind the family
O'er dear dumb souls that thrilled at man's caress,
And shared his pains with patient helpfulness.

But Tubal-Cain had caught and yoked the fire,
Yoked it with stones that bent the flaming spire
And made it roar in prisoned servitude
Within the furnace, till with force subdued
It changed all forms he willed to work upon,
Till hard from soft, and soft from hard, he won.
The pliant clay he moulded as he would,
And laughed with joy when 'mid the heat it stood
Shaped as his hand had chosen, while the mass
That from his hold, dark, obstinate, would pass
He drew all glowing from the busy heat,
All breathing as with life that he could beat
With thundering hammer, making it obey
His will creative, like the pale soft clay.
Each day he wrought and better than he planned,
Shape breeding shape beneath his restless hand.

(The soul without still helps the soul within,
And its deft magic ends what we begin.)
Nay, in his dreams his hammer he would wield
And seem to see a myriad types revealed,
Then spring with wondering triumphant cry,
And, lest the inspiring vision should go by,
Would rush to labour with that plastic zeal
Which all the passion of our life can steal
For force to work with. Each day saw the birth
Of various forms which, flung upon the earth,
Seemed harmless toys to cheat the exacting hour,
But were as seeds instinct with hidden power.
The axe, the club, the spikèd wheel, the chain,
Held silently the shrieks and moans of pain ;
And near them latent lay in share and spade,
In the strong bar, the saw, and deep-curved blade,
Glad voices of the hearth and harvest-home,
The social good, and all earth's joy to come.
Thus to mixed ends wrought Tubal ; and they say,
Some things he made have lasted to this day. . . .
He was the sire of swift-transforming skill,
Which arms for conquest man's ambitious will ;
And round him gladly, as his hammer rung,
Gathered the elders and the growing young :
These handled vaguely and those plied the tools,
Till, happy chance begetting conscious rules,
The home of Cain with industry was rife,
And glimpses of a strong persistent life,
Panting through generations as one breath,
And filling with its soul the blank of death.

Jubal, too, watched the hammer, till his eyes,
No longer following its fall or rise,
Seemed glad with something that they could not see,
But only listened to—some melody,

Wherein dumb longings inward speech had found,
Won from the common store of struggling sound.
Then, as the metal shapes more various grew,
And, hurled upon each other, resonance drew,
Each gave new tones, the revelations dim
Of some external soul that spoke for him :
The hollow vessel's clang, the clash, the boom,
Like light that makes wide spiritual room
And skyey spaces in the spaceless thought,
To Jubal such enlargèd passion brought
That love, hope, rage, and all experience,
Were fused in vaster being, fetching thence
Concords and discords, cadences and cries
That seemed from some world-shrouded soul to rise,
Some rapture more intense, some mightier rage,
Some living sea that burst the bounds of man's brief age.

Then with such blissful trouble and glad care
For growth within unborn as mothers bear,
To the far woods he wandered, listening,
And heard the birds their little stories sing
In notes whose rise and fall seemed melted speech—
Melted with tears, smiles, glances—that can reach
More quickly through our frame's deep-winding night,
And without thought raise thought's best fruit, delight.
Pondering, he sought his home again and heard
The fluctuant changes of the spoken word :
The deep remonstrance and the argued want,
Insistent first in close monotonous chant,
Next leaping upward to defiant stand
Or downward beating like the resolute hand ;
The mother's call, the children's answering cry,
The laugh's light cataract tumbling from on high ;

The suasive repetitions Jabal taught,
That timid browsing cattle homeward brought ;
The clear-winged fugue of echoes vanishing ;
And through them all the hammer's rhythmic ring. . . .

He said, " Were now those mighty tones and cries
That from the giant soul of earth arise,
Those groans of some great travail heard from far,
Some power at wrestle with the things that are,
Those sounds which vary with the varying form
Of clay and metal, and in sightless swarm
Fill the wide space with tremors : were these wed
To human voices with such passion fed
As does but glimmer in our common speech,
But might flame out in tones whose changing reach,
Surpassing meagre need, informs the sense
With fuller union, finer difference—
Were this great vision, now obscurely bright
As morning hills that melt in new-poured light,
Wrought into solid form and living sound,
Moving with ordered throb and sure rebound,
Then—Nay, I Jubal will that work begin !
The generations of our race shall win
New life, that grows from out the heart of this,
As spring from winter, or as lovers' bliss
From out the dull unknown of unwaked energies." . . .

Jubal must dare as great beginners dare,
Strike form's first way in matter rude and bare,
And, yearning vaguely towards the plenteous quire
Of the world's harvest, make one poor small lyre. . . .

Alone amid the hills at first he tried
His wingèd song ; then with adoring pride
And bridegroom's joy at leading forth his bride,
He said, " This wonder which my soul hath found,

This heart of music in the might of sound,
Shall forthwith be the share of all our race
And like the morning gladden common space :
The song shall spread and swell as rivers do,
And I will teach our youth with skill to woo
This living lyre, to know its secret will,
Its fine division of the good and ill.
So shall men call me sire of harmony,
And where great Song is, there my life shall be." . . .

Then from the east, with glory on his head
Such as low-slanting beams on corn-waves spread,
Came Jubal with his lyre : there 'mid the throng,
Where the blank space was, poured a solemn song,
Touching his lyre to full harmonic throb
And measured pulse, with cadences that sob,
Exult and cry, and search the inmost deep
Where the dark sources of new passion sleep. . . .
He [Cain] who had lived through twice three centuries,
Whose months monotonous, like trees on trees
In hoary forests, stretched a backward maze,
Dreamed himself dimly through the travelled days
Till in clear light he paused, and felt the sun
That warmed him when he was a little one ;
Felt that true heaven, the recovered past,
The dear small Known amid the Unknown vast,
And in that heaven wept. . . .

And thus did Jubal to his race reveal
Music their larger soul, where woe and weal
Filling the resonant chords, the song, the dance,
Moved with a wider-wingèd utterance.
Now many a lyre was fashioned, many a song
Raised echoes new, old echoes to prolong,

Till things of Jubal's making were so rife,
" Hearing myself," he said, " hems in my life,
And I will get me to some far-off land,
Where higher mountains under heaven stand
And touch the blue at rising of the stars,
Whose song they hear where no rough mingling
mars
The great clear voices. Such lands there must be,
Where varying forms make varying symphony—
Where other thunders roll amid the hills,
Some mightier wind a mightier forest fills
With other strains through other-shapen boughs ;
Where bees and birds and beasts that hunt or browse
Will teach me songs I know not. Listening there,
My life shall grow like trees both tall and fair
That rise and spread and bloom toward fuller fruit
each year."

He took a raft, and travelled with the stream
Southward for many a league, till he might deem
He saw at last the pillars of the sky,
Beholding mountains whose white majesty
Rushed through him as new awe, and made new song
That swept with fuller wave the chords along,
Weighting his voice with deep religious chime,
The iteration of slow chant sublime. . . .

And ever as he travelled he would climb
The farthest mountain, yet the heavenly chime,
The mighty tolling of the far-off spheres
Beating their pathway, never touched his ears.
But wheresoe'er he rose the heavens rose,
And the far-gazing mountain could disclose
Nought but a wider earth ; until one height
Showed him the ocean stretched in liquid light,

And he could hear its multitudinous roar,
Its plunge and hiss upon the pebbled shore :
Then Jubal silent sat, and touched his lyre no more.

He thought, " The world is great, but I am weak,
And where the sky bends is no solid peak
To give me footing, but instead, this main—
Myriads of maddened horses thundering o'er the plain.

" New voices come to me where'er I roam,
My heart too widens with its widening home :
But song grows weaker, and the heart must break
For lack of voice, or fingers that can wake
The lyre's full answer ; nay, its chords were all
Too few to meet the growing spirit's call.
The former songs seem little, yet no more
Can soul, hand, voice, with interchanging lore
Tell what the earth is saying unto me :
The secret is too great, I hear confusedly.

" No farther will I travel : once again
My brethren I will see, and that fair plain
Where I and Song were born. There fresh-voiced youth
Will pour my strains with all the early truth
Which now abides not in my voice and hands,
But only in the soul, the will that stands
Helpless to move. My tribe remembering
Will cry ' 'Tis he ! ' and run to greet me, welcoming." . . .

But wending ever through the watered plain,
Firm not to rest save in the home of Cain,
He saw dread Change, with dubious face and cold
That never kept a welcome for the old,

Like some strange heir upon the hearth, arise
Saying, " This home is mine." . . .

But while he sank far music reached his ear,
He listened until wonder silenced fear
And gladness wonder ; for the broadening stream
Of sound advancing was his early dream,
Brought like fulfilment of forgotten prayer ;
As if his soul, breathed out upon the air,
Had held the invisible seeds of harmony
Quick with the various strains of life to be.
He listened : the sweet mingled difference
With charm alternate took the meeting sense ;
Then bursting like some shield-broad lily red,
Sudden and near the trumpet's notes outspread,
And soon his eyes could see the metal flower,
Shining upturned, out on the morning pour
Its incense audible ; could see a train
From out the street slow-winding on the plain
With lyres and cymbals, flutes and psalteries,
While men, youths, maids, in concert sang to these
With various throat, or in succession poured,
Or in full volume mingled. But one word
Ruled each recurrent rise and answering fall,
As when the multitudes adoring call
On some great name divine, their common soul,
The common need, love, joy, that knits them in one
whole.

The word was " Jubal ! " . . . " Jubal " filled the air
And seemed to ride aloft, a spirit there,
Creator of the quire, the full-fraught strain
That grateful rolled itself to him again.
The aged man adust upon the bank—
Whom no eye saw—at first with rapture drank

The bliss of music, then, with swelling heart,
Felt, this was his own being's greater part,
The universal joy once born in him.
But when the train, with living face and limb
And vocal breath, came nearer and more near,
The longing grew that they should hold him dear ;
Him, Lamech's son, whom all their fathers knew,
The breathing Jubal—him, to whom their love was due. . . .

For no eye saw him, while with loving pride
Each voice with each in praise of Jubal vied.
Must he in conscious trance, dumb, helpless lie
While all that ardent kindred passed him by ?
His flesh cried out to live with living men
And join that soul which to the inward ken
Of all the hymning train was present there.
Strong passion's daring sees not aught to dare :
The frost-locked starkness of his frame low-bent,
His voice's penury of tones long spent,
He felt not ; all his being leaped in flame
To meet his kindred as they onward came
Slackening and wheeling toward the temple's face :
He rushed before them to the glittering space,
And, with a strength that was but strong desire,
Cried, " I am Jubal, I ! . . . I made the lyre ! " .

[*He is heard at first with laughter, and then is beaten away for profanity.*]

The immortal name of Jubal filled the sky,
While Jubal lonely laid him down to die.
He said within his soul, " This is the end :
O'er all the earth to where the heavens bend
And hem men's travel, I have breathed my soul :
I lie here now the remnant of that whole,

The embers of a life, a lonely pain ;
As far-off rivers to my thirst were vain,
So of my mighty years nought comes to me again.

" Is the day sinking ? Softest coolness springs
From something round me : dewy shadowy wings
Enclose me all around—no, not above—
Is moonlight there ? I see a face of love,
Fair as sweet music when my heart was strong :
Yea—art thou come again to me, great Song ? "

The face bent over him like silver night
In long-remembered summers ; that calm light
Of days which shine in firmaments of thought,
That past unchangeable, from change still wrought.
And gentlest tones were with the vision blent :
He knew not if that gaze the music sent,
Or music that calm gaze : to hear, to see,
Was but one undivided ecstasy :
The raptured senses melted into one,
And parting life a moment's freedom won
From in and outer, as a little child
Sits on a bank and sees blue heavens mild
Down in the water, and forgets its limbs,
And knoweth naught save the blue heaven that swims.

" Jubal," the face said, " I am thy loved Past,
The soul that makes thee one from first to last.
I am the angel of thy life and death,
Thy outbreathed being drawing its last breath.
Am I not thine alone, a dear dead bride
Who blest thy lot above all men's beside ? . . .
Wouldst thou have asked aught else from any god—
Whether with gleaming feet on earth he trod
Or thundered through the skies—aught else for share
Of mortal good, than in thy soul to bear

The growth of song, and feel the sweet unrest
Of the world's spring-tide in thy conscious breast?
No, thou hadst grasped thy lot with all its pain,
Nor loosed it any painless lot to gain
When music's voice was silent; for thy fate
Was human music's self incorporate:
Thy sense's keenness and thy passionate strife
Were flesh of *her* flesh and her womb of life . . .
And on the mountains in thy wandering
Thy feet were beautiful as blossomed Spring,
That turns the leafless wood to love's glad home,
For with thy coming Melody was come.
This was thy lot, to feel, create, bestow,
And that immeasurable life to know
From which the fleshly self falls shrivelled, dead,
A seed primeval that has forests bred.
It is the glory of the heritage
Thy life has left, that makes thy outcast age;
Thy limbs shall lie dark, tombless on this sod,
Because thou shinest in man's soul, a god,
Who found and gave new passion and new joy
That nought but Earth's destruction can destroy.
Thy gifts to give was thine of men alone:
'Twas but in giving that thou could'st atone
For too much wealth amid their poverty."—

The words seemed melting into symphony,
The wings upbore him, and the gazing song
Was floating him the heavenly space along,
Where mighty harmonies all gently fell
Through veiling vastness, like the far-off bell,
Till, ever onward through the choral blue,
He heard more faintly and more faintly knew,
Quitting mortality, a quenched sun-wave,
The All-creating Presence for his grave.

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